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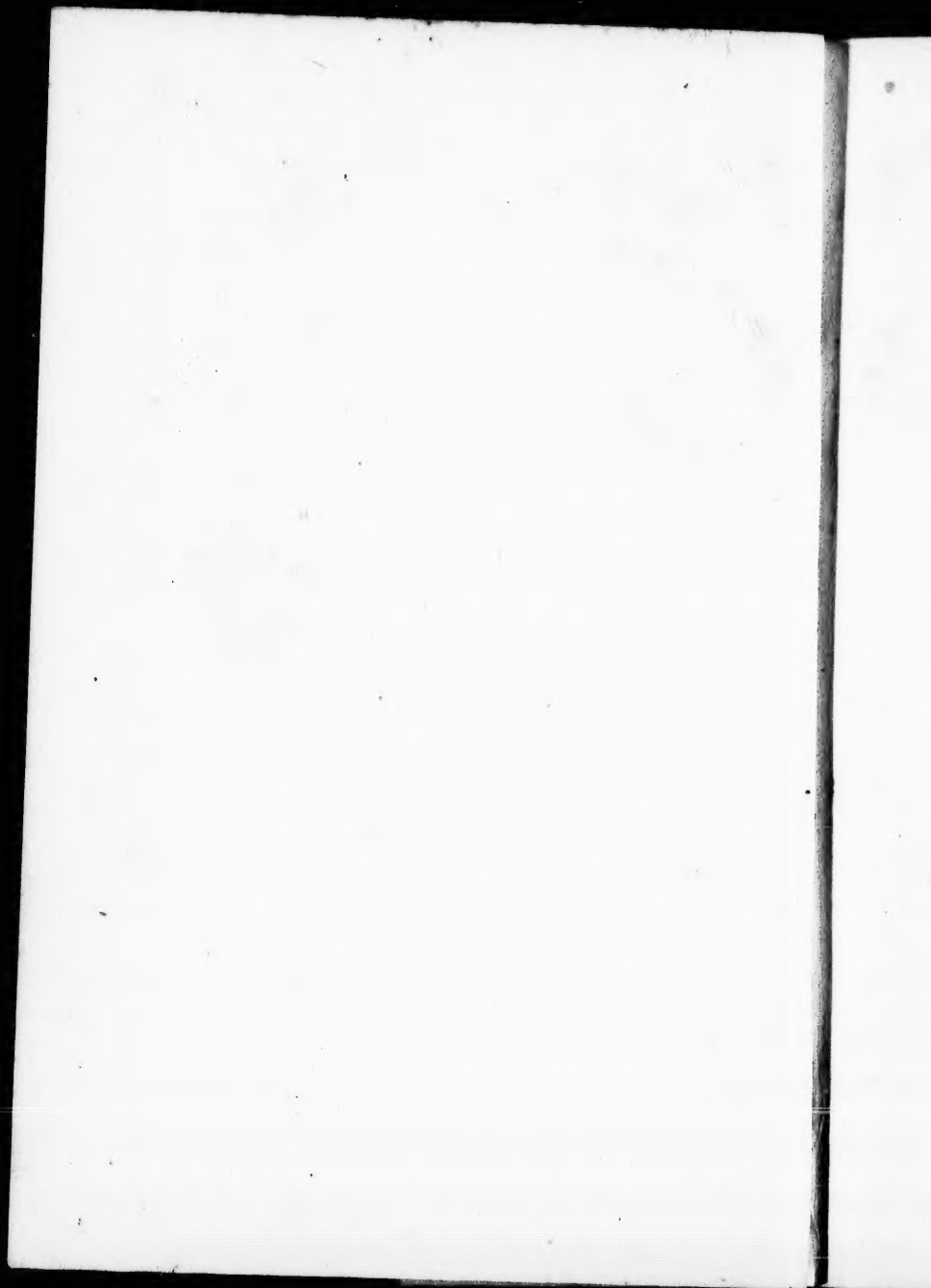
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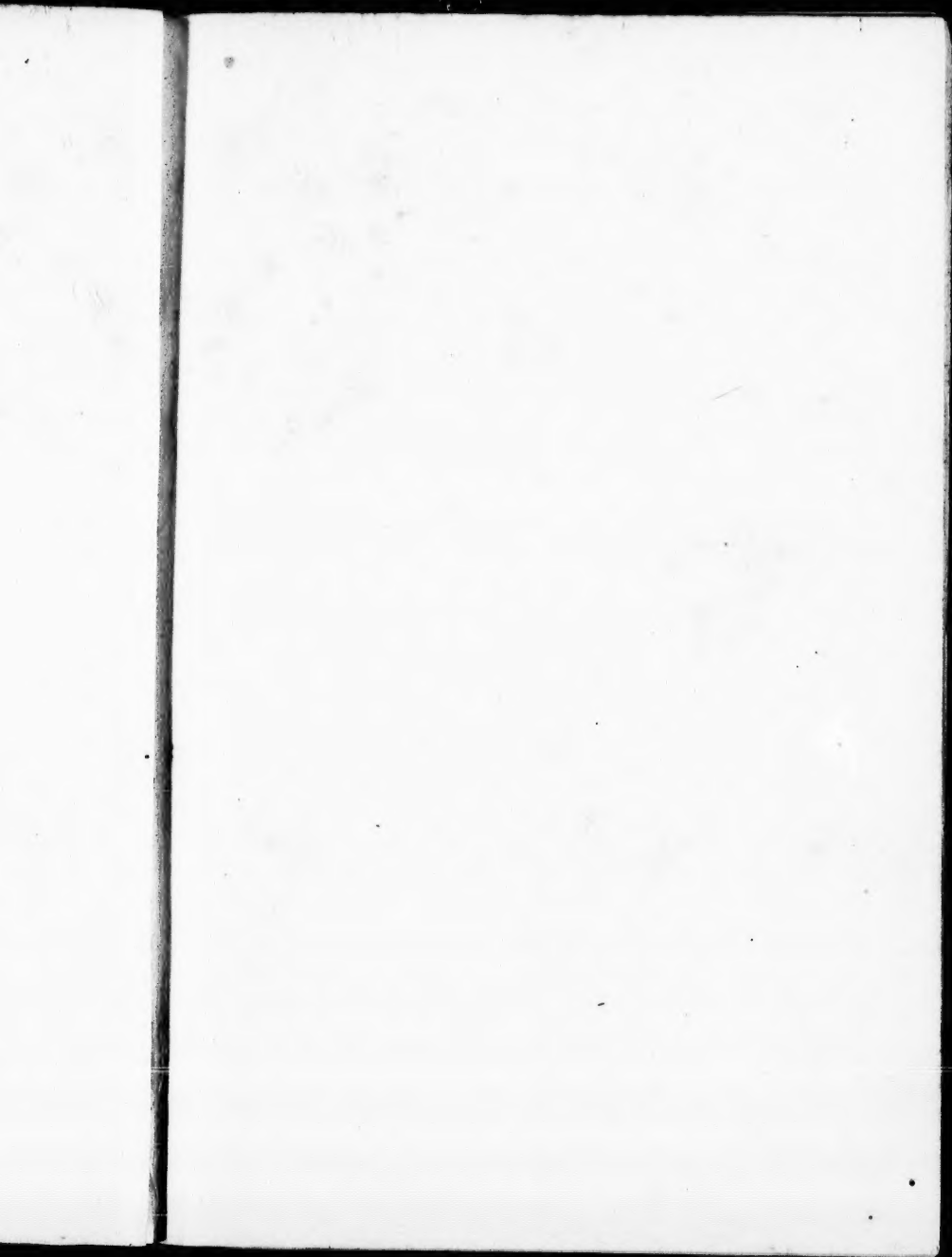
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CHATEAU D'OR.

NORAH AND KITTY CRAIG.

BY

MRS. MARY J. HOLMES,

AUTHOR OF

"FORREST HOUSE," "EDITH LYLE," "TEMPEST AND SUNSHINE," "LENA
RIVERS," "MILDRED," ETC.



Toronto:

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CHATEAU D'OR.

WE had left Paris behind us, and were going down to the southern part of France, as far as Marseilles and Nice. All day Hal and I had had the compartment to ourselves, and had talked, and smoked, and read, and looked out upon the country through which we were passing so rapidly. But this had become rather monotonous, and I was beginning to tire of the gray rocks, and bleak mountain sides, and gnarled olive trees, when suddenly, as we turned a curve and came out into a more open and fertile tract, Hal seized my arm, and pointing to the left of us said:

"Quick, quick! Do you see that old chateau in the distance?"

Following the direction of his hand, I saw what at first seemed to be a mass of dark stone walls, turrets, towers and balconies, tumbled promiscuously together, and forming an immense pile of ruins. A closer and nearer inspection however, showed me a huge stone building, which must have been very old, judging from its style of architec-

ture, and the thickness of its walls, and the gray moss, which had crept up to the very eaves, and found there before it the ivy, which grows so rankly and luxuriantly in many parts of France.

"Yes, I see it," I said. "What of it, and what place is it?"

"That," said Hal, "is CHATEAU D'OR, which, translated into plain English for a stupid like you, means 'Chateau of gold,' though why that sombre, dreary old pile should have that name, is more than I can tell, unless it is that it cost so much to build it. It is nearly two hundred years old. Its first owner ruined himself on it, I believe, and it has passed through many hands since. You see that stream of water yonder, almost a river? Well, that passes entirely round the chateau, which really stands on an island, and is only accessible from one point, and that an iron bridge. That old building has been the scene of the strangest story you ever heard—almost a tragedy, in fact, and the heroine was an American woman, and native of my own town. I'll tell you about it to-night, after we have had our dinner."

I was interested now, and leaned far out of the window to look at the chateau, which seemed gloomy and dreary enough to warrant the wildest story one could tell of it. And that night I heard the story which I now write down, using sometimes Hal Morton's words, and sometimes my own.



THE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

ANNA STRONG.

MILLFIELD," said Hal, "is one of those little New England towns which seem to have been finished up years and years ago, and gone quietly to sleep without a suspicion that anything more could be expected of it. It stands on a spur of the mountains which lie between Pittsfield and Albany, and can be distinctly seen from the car windows, with its spotless houses of white, with fresh green blinds, and the inevitable lilac bushes and sweet syringas in front. I was born there, and when I wish to rest and get away from the noise and turmoil of New York, I go there and grow a younger and better man amid the Sunday stillness which reigns perpetually in its streets. And yet you would be surprised to find how much intelligence and genuine aristocracy that little village has. There are the Crosbys, who claim relationship with the Adamases, and a real scion of the Washingtons, and a

lineal descendant of Lord Cornwallis, and Miss Talleyrand, who prides herself upon having, in her veins, the best blood in New England, though good old Deacon Larkin's wife once shocked her horribly by saying, 'she didn't see, for her part, why Polly Talleyrand need to brag so about good blood, when she was as full of erysipelas as she could hold.' "

Here I laughed heartily over Miss Talleyrand's good blood, while Hal lighted a fresh cigar, and continued :

" Next to these aristocrats, upper crust, as the deacon's wife called them--comes the well-to-do class, tradespeople and mechanics, the people whose sons and daughters work in the shoe-shops, for you know the shoe business is nowhere carried on so extensively as in New England, and it gives employment to many girls as well as boys, the former stitching the uppers, as they are called, and the latter putting on the soles. There is a very large shop in Millfield, which employs at least fifty girls, and at the time I am telling you about, there was not in the whole fifty--no, nor in the entire town--so pretty a girl as Anna Strong, the heroine of my story. She was not very intellectual, it is true, or very fond of books, but she was beautiful to look at, with a lithe, graceful figure, and winsome ways, while her voice was sweet and clear as a robin's. Birdie Strong, we called her, on account of her voice, and when she sang in the gallery of the old brick church, I used to shut my eyes, and fancy I was in Heaven, listening to the music of the sweetest singer there.

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"Bob, I may as well be frank with you. I was in love with Anna Strong, and I am certain she liked *me* a little, though she never encouraged me in the least. She was not a bit of a coquette, and made no secret of the fact that *money*, and nothing else, would have any influence with her. Anna was ambitious, and when, from her shoe-bench in the hot work-room, she saw Judge Crosby's daughter go by in her dainty white dress and sash of blue, she thought hard, bitter things of the humble life she led, and vowed to accept the first man who could give her silks, and lace, and diamonds, and a place in society.

"At last the man came—a brusque, haughty Englishman, with a slight limp in his left ankle, and a cold, hard expression in his steel-gray eyes, but tolerably good-looking, with a certain assurance and style, and lavish generosity, which won upon the people, and made him quite a lion. Eva Crosby invited him to tea; Miss Talleyrand's niece drove with him once or twice; and so he became the fashion. He was not young—was thirty-five at least, and looked older. He was of Scottish descent, he said, though English born, and he owned an estate in the north of Scotland, a large chateau in the south of France, and a city house in London, and he called himself Ernest Walsingham Haverleigh. If he chose he could be very gracious and agreeable, though his manner was always haughty in the extreme, and had in it an undisguised contempt for everything American.

"I disliked him from the first, and hated him after the day of Miss Crosby's lawn party, to which Anna Strong

was invited, and where she shone the belle of the fête, notwithstanding that her dress was a simple blue muslin, and the ruffle round her throat imitation lace. I learned that fact from hearing Miss Talleyrand's niece, from Springfield, say to Eva Crosby, in speaking of Anna, 'she is rather pretty, but decidedly *flashy*. Her love of finery leads her to wear imitation lace. If there's any one thing I detest, it is that. It always stamps a person.'

"And so Anna was stamped, but did not seem to mind it at all. How plainly I can see her now as she came through the gate with her hat in her hand, and her beautiful hair falling in curls about her neck and shoulders.

"Up to that moment Haverleigh had maintained an indolent, bored attitude, with a look of supreme indifference on his face, but when Anna joined us, his manner changed at once, and he devoted himself to her with a persistency which brought upon her the jealous rancour of every lady present. But Anna did not seem to know it, and received the Englishman's attentions with an air of sweet unconsciousness, which only deepened his ardour, and made him perfectly oblivious to every one around him. The next day he made some inquiries with regard to Anna's family, and before night had learned all there was to know of them, both good and bad. They were poor, but perfectly respectable people, and no taint had ever rested upon the name of Strong. Years and years before, Grandfather Strong had married a second wife, with a daughter about the age of his own son, afterwards Anna's father, and this daughter, Milly Gardner, who

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was in no way connected with the Strongs, had run away with a Boston man, who promised her marriage and then deserted her. A few years later news was received in Millfield of her death, and so the scandal died and was buried in poor Milly's grave, and the family seldom spoke her name. Indeed, Anna's mother, who was many years younger than her husband, had never known Milly, while Mr. Strong himself, who had loved her as a dear sister, never blamed her. She was more sinned against than sinning, and so he let her rest in peace, and his children only knew of her as Aunt Milly, who was very pretty, and who was dead. Mr. Strong was dead now himself, and his widow lived in a little red house on the common with her three children—Mary, who made dresses in the winter, and taught school in the summer; Anna, who worked in the shoe-shop; and Fred., the youngest and pet of the family, who was destined for college, and for whom the mother and sisters hoarded their small earnings and denied themselves everything.

"This is the history of the Strongs up to the time when Haverleigh came to Millfield and made up his mind to marry Anna, with the decided understanding, however, that in taking her he was not taking her family. And Anna listened to him, and throwing aside her love, and pride, and womanhood, cast into one scale her humble home, with its poverty and privations, her scanty dress, her hateful life of toil in the dingy shop, stitching shoes for the negroes to wear; while into the other she put a life of ease and luxury, the country seat in Scotland, the

Chateau in Southern France, the city house in London, and the gay season there, and what weighed more with her—the satins, and laces, and diamonds which, as Mrs. Haverleigh, she was sure to wear. Of course the latter scale overbalanced the former, and without a particle of love, but rather with a feeling of dread and fear for the cold Englishman, Anna promised to be his wife, on one condition. Fred. was to go to college, the mortgage of five hundred dollars on the red house was to be paid, her mother was to have a dress of handsome black silk, and Mary one of dark blue. This request she made timidly, not daring to look at the man who, with a sneer on his face, answered laughingly :

“ ‘ Oh, that is a mere trifle. Fred. shall go to college, the mortgage shall be paid, the silk gowns shall be forthcoming, and here is the wherewithal.’ ”

“ It was a check for five thousand dollars which he gave her, and his unlooked-for generosity went far toward reconciling Mrs. Strong and Mary to the match. And so it was a settled thing, and Anna stitched her last shoe in the dingy shop ; went down the staircase for the last time, sang her last song in church, and was married quietly at home one lovely morning in July, when Millfield was looking its best from the effects of a recent rain. There were drops of crystal on the freshly cut grass, and the air was sweet with the perfume of roses, and pinks, and heliotrope, while the sky overhead was blue and clear as the eyes of the young bride, who, if she felt any regret for the home she was leaving, did not show it in the least. Per-

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haps she was thinking of the costly diamond on her finger, and the silken robe she wore, or possibly of the grandeur which awaited her over the sea. Poor Anna—she was very young—only eighteen—and to change at once from a poor girl, who was every morning awakened by the shoe-shop whistle, to a life she hated, to step into wealth and elegance must have benumbed and bewildered her so that she did not realize what she was doing, when at last she said good-by to the home of her childhood, and went away alone with a man she had scarcely known two months—a man whom she did not love, and who, even while caressing her, made her feel the immense condescension it had been on his part to make her his wife.

“Their destination was New York, where Anna had never been, and where they were to spend a week or two before sailing for Europe. At the hotel where they stopped, Anna met with an old school friend, who, like herself, was a bride taking her wedding trip. As was natural, the two young girls talked together freely of their future prospects and the husbands they had chosen, and Anna could not help showing her elation at being the wife of a man like Mr. Haverleigh.

“‘But tell me honestly, do you love him?’ Mrs. Fleming said to her one day. ‘He is not at all the person I should have selected for you. Why, do you know I feel a kind of terror stealing over me every time he speaks to me, there is such a hard ring in his voice, and it seems to me a cruel look in his eyes. Then I always thought you would eventually marry Hal Morton.’

"This was a great deal to say to a bride concerning her husband, but Lucy Fleming was just the one to take liberties, and Anna did not resent it in the least, but answered laughingly: 'Oh, *Hal* is quite *too* poor. He took it hard, and looked like a goosey at the wedding. I fancy he did not like Mr. Haverleigh, and I see you think him a kind of Blue Beard, too, and so I confess do I, but then I never intend to *peek*, and lose my life as did his silly wives. Honestly, though, Lucy, I do not love him, and I experience that same fear of him which you describe, and actually shrink from him when he kisses me; but he is very kind to me, and I believe loves me truly, and I shall make him think that I love him. I married him for money, for fine dresses, and jewellery, and handsome furniture, and servants, and horses and carriages, and that Chateau d'Or, which did more toward influencing me than anything else. Only think of living in a house almost as large as a castle, with a French maid, and troops of servants, and a housekeeper to take every care from me; one could almost endure any man for the sake of all that.'

"Here the conversation ceased, and a moment after Mr. Haverleigh himself entered the room. To an ordinary observer there was nothing in his manner to indicate that he had overheard a word, but there was a kind of ferocious look in his eyes, and his lips were shut more tightly together than usual as he bowed to Mrs. Fleming, and then, crossing to his wife, bent over her affectionately, and kissed her forehead as he asked if she would take a drive. It was a lovely afternoon. The Park was full of people,

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and Anna's fresh young face attracted a great deal of notice, as did the haughty looking man at her side, who had never been as lover-like in his attentions as he was from that day on until the ocean was crossed, and they were at the Grosvenor House in London. His own house was closed, he said, when Anna asked why they did not go there, but he drove her past it, and she was sure she saw a lady's face looking at them from one of the upper windows. Haverleigh must have seen it, too, for he muttered something which sounded like an execration under his breath, and drove on faster than before.

"Does any one live in your house? I thought I saw a lady at the window,' Anna said, timidly, for she was beginning to understand his moods, as he called his frequent fits of abstraction, and knew he was in one now.

"There was nobody occupying his house, and she had not seen any one at the window, he answered rather curtly; but Anna knew she had, and dreamed that night of the large black eyes that had peered at her so curiously from the house on Belgrave Square. She could not be ignorant of the fact, either, that her husband, while paying her marked attention, especially in the parks and at table, was restless, and nervous, and very anxious to hurry away from London, and very impatient on account of the slight illness which kept them there a week longer than he wished to stay.

"Once, just before their marriage, he had asked her whether she would rather go to Scotland first or France,

and she had answered Scotland, preferring Southern France later in the autumn, when she hoped to see Nice and Mentone, before settling down for the winter at Chateau d'Or. 'Then to Scotland we will go,' he had replied, and she had greatly anticipated her visit to Scotland, and her trip through the Trosachs, and across the beautiful Lakes Lomond and Katrine, but all this was to be given up; her master had changed his mind, and without a word of explanation told her that they were going at once to Paris.

"'You can attend to your dressmaking bester there than elsewhere, and you know you are fond of satins, and laces, and jewellery,' he said, and there was a gleam in his eye from which Anna would have shrunk had she noticed it; but she did not. She was thinking of Paris and its gaieties, and she packed her trunks without a word of dissent, and was soon established in a handsome suite of rooms at the Grand Hotel, with permission to buy whatever she wanted, irrespective of expense.

"'I'd like you to have morning dresses, and dinner dresses, and evening dresses, and riding dresses, and walking dresses, and everything necessary to a lady's wardrobe,' he said; and poor unsuspecting Anna thought, 'How much society he must expect me to see, and how glad I shall be of it!'"

Anna was beginning to feel a good deal bored with no company but that of her husband, for though he sometimes bowed to ladies on the Boulevards, no one came to see her, and as their meals were served in their parlour,

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she had but little chance to cultivate the acquaintance of the people staying at the hotel, so that, with the exception of her milliner and dressmaker, both of whom spoke English, and a few clerks at the different stores, she could talk with no one in all the great, gay city, and there gradually settled down upon her a feeling of loneliness and home-sickness, for which all her costly dresses and jewellery could not make amends. But this would be changed when they were at Nice or Mentone, or even at the chateau, which her husband told her was frequently full of guests during the autumn months. Oh, how many pictures she drew of that chateau, with its turrets and towers overlooking the surrounding country, its beautiful grounds, its elegantly furnished rooms, its troops of servants, and herself mistress of it all, with a new dress for every day in the month if she liked, for it almost amounted to that before her shopping was done, and when at last they left Paris, the porters counted fourteen trunks which they had brought down from No. —, all the property of the pretty little lady, whose travelling dress of gray silk was a marvel of puffs, and ruffles, and plaitings, and sashes, as she took her seat in the carriage, and was driven away through the streets of Paris to the Lyons Station.

"They were going to the chateau first, her husband told her, adding that he hoped the arrangement suited her.

" 'Oh, certainly,' she replied. 'I shall be so glad to see one of my new homes. I know I shall like it, and perhaps be so happy there that I shall not care to leave it for a long time. I am getting a little tired.'

"They were alone in the railway carriage, and as Anna said this she leaned her head against his arm as if she were really tired and wanted rest. It was the first voluntary demonstration of the kind she had ever made toward him, and there came a sudden flush into his face and a light into his eyes, but he did not pass his arm around the drooping little figure—he merely suffered the bright head to rest upon his shoulder, while he gazed gloomily out upon the country they were passing, not thinking of the dreary landscape, the barren hills, and grey mountain tops, but rather of the diabolical purpose from which he had never swerved an hour since the moment it was formed.



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CHAPTER II.

CHATEAU D'OR.

"IT was late one September afternoon when they came at last in sight of the chateau, and Haverleigh pointed it out to Anna, who involuntarily exclaimed :

"'Why, it's more like a prison than a house : is that Chateau d'Or ?'

"'Yes, that's Chateau d'Or,' was the short reply, and fifteen minutes later they stopped at the little town where they were to leave the train.

"Two men were waiting for them, one the coachman, who touched his hat with the utmost deference to his master, while the other seemed on more familiar terms with Mr. Haverleigh, and stared so curiously at Anna that she drew her veil over her face, and conceived for him on the instant an aversion which she never overcame. He was a tall, dark man, with a sinister expression on his face, and a look in his keen black eyes as if he was constantly on the alert for something which it was his duty to discover. Her husband introduced him as Monsieur Brunell, explaining to her that he was his confidential agent, his head man, who superintended Chateau d'Or in

his absence, and whose house was close to the bridge which crossed the river, so that no one could ever leave the grounds without his knowledge.

"Anna paid but little heed to what he was saying then, though it afterwards came back to her with fearful significance. Now, however, she was too tired and too anxious to see the inside of the chateau to think of anything except the man's disagreeable face, and she was glad to find herself alone with her husband in the carriage.

" 'Why does that man stare so impudently at me? I don't like it,' she said, and Haverleigh replied, jestingly:

" 'Oh, that's the way with Frenchmen; he thinks you pretty, no doubt.'

"They had crossed the bridge by this time, and Anna noticed that they passed through a heavy iron gate, which immediately swung together with a dull thud which sent a shiver through her as if it really were the gate of a prison. They were now in the park and grounds which were beautifully kept, and Anna forgot everything in her delight at what she saw about her.

" 'Oh, I shall be so happy here!' she cried, as they rode along the broad carriage road, and she saw everywhere signs of luxury and wealth.

"And at that moment Anna was happy. She had sighed for money, for a home handsomer than the humble red house far away among the New England hills, and lo, here was something more beautiful than anything of which she had ever dreamed. If there had been anything

lovable about Ernest Haverleigh, Anna might have loved him then in her great delight with the home he was bringing her to; but there was nothing in his nature answering to hers, and he did not seem to see how pleased she was, but sat back in the carriage, with a dark look on his face and a darker purpose in his heart. And still he saw her every moment, and watched the light in her eyes and the clasping of her hands as she leaned from the window; but it awoke no answering chord of gladness, unless it were a gladness that he had in his power to avenge the insult he had received. They were close to the chateau now, directly in the shadow of the grey old walls, which looked so dark and gloomy, so out of keeping with the beauty of the grounds, that Anna's spirits sank again, and there was a tremor in her frame as she descended from the carriage in the wide court, around which balconies ran, tier upon tier, and into which so many long, narrow windows looked.

"At the head of a flight of steps an elderly woman was standing, her white hair arranged in puffs about her face, which, though old and wrinkled, was so sweet and sad in its expression that Anna felt drawn to her at once, and the court was not half so damp and dreary, or the walls so dark and high.

"The woman was dressed in black silk, with a tasteful lace cap upon her head, while the bunch of keys attached to her side with a silver chain showed her to be the housekeeper, even before Mr. Haverleigh said:

"This is Madame Verwest, the head of the house, just

as Monsieur Brunell is head of the grounds. You will do well to conciliate her, and not show your dislike, if you feel it, as you did to monsieur.'

"Oh, I shall love her. I love her now for that sweet sorry face. Has she had some great trouble, Ernest?"

"It was the first time Anna had ever called her husband by the familiar name of Ernest. He had asked her to do so in the days of their courtship, and she had answered him, playfully: 'Oh, Mr. Haverleigh, you are so much older than I am, and know so much more, and then — Well, to tell the truth, I am a little bit afraid of you yet, but by and by I mean to learn to say Ernest.'

"But the by and by had never come until now. Anna was the creature of impulse, and while driving through the handsome grounds she had felt elated and proud, that she, little Anna Strong, who once sewed shoes in New England, and planned how to get an extra pair of gloves, should be riding in her carriage, the mistress of so much wealth, and her heart had thrilled a little for the man through whom this good fortune had come to her. But the gloomy chateau, and the still more gloomy court, had driven this all away, and a wave of genuine homesickness was sweeping over her when the serene face of Madame Verwest looked so kindly down upon her and brought the better feeling back. She *was* happy. She was glad she was there, Mr. Haverleigh's wife, and she called him Ernest purposely, and looked up in his face as she did so. Did he soften toward her at all? Possibly, for a red flush crept up to his hair; but he raised his hand as if to brush

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it away, and then he was himself again—the man who never forgave, and who could break a young girl's heart even while seeming to caress her. If he heard Anna's question with regard to Madame Verwest, he did not notice it or make her any answer. He merely took her arm in his, and leading her up the broad stone steps, presented her to the lady as Madame Haverleigh, his wife.

"Instantly there came a change over the placid features, which kindled with a strange light, and the dim eyes, which looked so accustomed to tears, fastened themselves eagerly upon the fair face of the young girl, and then were raised questioningly to the dark face of the man whose lips curled with a sneering smile, as he said, in French :

"'She does not understand a word. Ask me what you please.'

"'Your wife truly!' was the quick question of the woman, and Haverleigh replied :

"'Yes, truly. What do you take me for?'

"To this there was no answer, but the woman's arms were stretched toward Anna with a quick, sudden motion, as if they fain would hold her a moment in their embrace; but a look from Mr. Haverleigh checked the impulse, and only madame's hand was offered to Anna, who, nevertheless, felt the warm welcome in the way the fingers tightened round her own, and was sure she had found a friend.

"'Madame is very welcome, and I hope she will be happy here,' the woman said ; but she might as well have

talked in Greek to Anna, who could only guess from her manner what she meant to say, and who smiled brightly back upon her, as she followed on up one narrow staircase after another, until they reached a lofty room, which she first thought a hall such as the New Englanders call a ball-room, but which she soon discovered to be the apartment intended for herself.

"The floor was inlaid and waxed, and so slippery that she came near falling as she first crossed the threshold. A few Persian rugs were thrown down here and there, and at the further end, near to a deep alcove, was a massive rosewood bed, with lace and silken hangings, and heavy tassels with knotted fringe. On the bed was a light blue satin spread, covered with real Valenciennes lace of a most exquisite pattern, and Anna stood a moment in wonder to look at and marvel at its richness. Then her eyes went on to the alcove, across which lace curtains were stretched, and which was daintily fitted up with the appliances of the toilet, with the bath-room just beyond. All this was at the far end of the room, the remainder of which might have served as a boudoir for the empress herself, it was so exquisitely furnished with everything which the ingenuity of Paris could devise in the way of fauteuil, ottoman, easy-chair, and lounge, with mosaic tables from Florence, inlaid cabinets from Rome, lovely porcelains from Munich and full-length mirrors from Marseilles.

"'This is your room; how do you like it?' Mr. Haverleigh asked: and Anna replied:

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"I wish mother and Mary knew. I wish they could be here too. Only the windows are kind of prison-like, they are so long and narrow, and so deep in the wall."

"As she said this she entered one of the arched recesses and tried to look from the window, but it was almost too high for her, and by standing on tip-toe she could just look over the ledge and get a view of the tree-tops in the grounds, of rocky hills beyond, and in the far distance a bit of the blue Mediterranean, which brought back to her mind a day at the seaside, where she had gone with a picnic party and bathed in the Atlantic. That day seemed so wery, very far back in the past, and the ocean waves she had watched as they broke upon the beach was so far, far away that again that throb of homesickness swept over her, and there were tears in her eyes when she turned from the window and came back into the salon. It was empty, for both her husband and Madame Verwest had left it, and she was free to look about her as much as she liked, and to examine the many beautiful things with which the salon was filled. But they did not quite satisfy her now, for that pang of pain was still in her heart cutting like a knife, and her thoughts went back to the day when she and Mary had fitted the cheap ingrain carpet and white curtains to the little parlour at home, and thought it, when done, the finest room in Millfield. The carpet and curtains were there still, but oh, how many miles and miles of land and sea lay between her and the humble surroundings she had once so fretted against, longing for something better!

She had the something better, but it did not satisfy, and it was so dreadful to be in a strange land where she could not understand a word the people said, and it would be still more dreadful without Mr. Haverleigh there as interpreter, she thought; and there began to grow in her a sense of nearness to her husband, a feeling of dependence upon and protection in him such as she had not experienced before.

" 'I believe I could love him after all; anyway, I mean to try, and will begin to-night,' she thought, just as there came a knock upon the door, and in answer to her '*Entrez*,' the one French word besides *oui* which she knew, a smart-looking young woman entered, followed by a man, who was bringing in her trunks.

" With a low courtesy, the girl managed to make Anna understand that her name was Celine, and that she was to be her waiting-maid, and had come to dress her for dinner.

" '*Voyez les clefs*,' she said, holding up the keys which her master had given her, one of which she proceeded to fit to a certain trunk, as if she knew its contents, and that it contained what she wanted.

" Anna had not before had the luxury of a maid, but she accepted it naturally as she did everything else, and gave herself at once into the deft hands of Celine, who brushed and arranged her beautiful hair with many expressions of delight, not one of which Anna understood. But she knew she was being complimented, and when her toilet was completed, and she saw herself in one of

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the long mirrors arrayed in a soft, light gray silk, with trimmings of blue and lace, with flowers in her hair, and pearls on her arms and neck, she felt that Celine's praises were just, and laughed back at the vision of her own loveliness.

" 'Oh, if the folks at home could see me now they would say it paid,' she thought, as she walked up and down the apartment, trailing her silken robe after her and catching frequent flashes of her beauty in the mirrors as she passed.

" And still there was a little of the old home-sickness left, a yearning for companionship, for somebody to see her, somebody to talk to, and then she remembered her resolution to try to love her husband, and she said again : 'I'll do it, and I'll begin to-night.'

" But where was he that he left her thus alone, walking up and down, until, too tired to walk longer, she seated herself upon a satin couch to await his coming, little dreaming as she sat there of the scene which had taken place between him and Madame Verwest, who had invited him to her own room, and then turning fiercely upon him, demanded : 'Tell me, is she your wife, or another Agatha, brought here to beat her wings against her prison bars until death gives her release ? She is too young for that, too beautiful, too innocent, with those childish eyes of blue. Tell me you mean well by her, or——'

" She did not finish her threat, save by a stamp of her foot and an angry flash of the eyes, which had looked so pityingly at Anna, for Haverleigh interrupted her with

a coarse laugh, and said : 'Spare yourself all uneasiness and puny threats which can avail nothing. You are as much in my power as she. Honestly, though this girl is as lawfully my wife as a New England parson could make her.'

"'New England,' and the woman started as if stung. 'Is she an American? Is she from New England? You wrote me she was English born.'

"'Did I? I had forgotten it. Well, then, she is an American and a New Englander, and her name was Anna Strong, and she worked in a shoe-shop in Millfield, where I stopped for a few months on account of the scenery first, and her pretty face afterwards. I married her for love, and because I fancied she loved me a little; but I have found she does not, and so she shall pay the penalty, but have her price all the same, diamonds and pearls, with satins and laces and a dress for every day of the month.'

"He spoke bitterly, and in his eyes there was a look which boded no good to Anna, but Madame Verwest scarcely heard him. At the mention of Anna's name and Millfield she had laid her hand suddenly over her heart, which beat so loudly that she could hear it herself, while her eyes had in them a concentrated, far-off look, and she evidently was not thinking of the object around her, the old chateau and the dreadful man who brought her back to the present by saying :

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my wish that she has everything she wants except, of course, her freedom ; you understand ?'

"She did understand ; she had been through the same thing once before, and she shuddered as she remembered the dark-haired, white-faced girl, who had died in that gloomy house, with wild snatches of song upon her lips, songs of 'Ma Normandie,' and the home where she had once been pure and innocent. '*Je vais revoir ma Normandie*' poor Agatha had sung as the breath was leaving her quivering lips, and the sad, sweet refrain had seemed to Madame Verwest to haunt the old chateau ever since, and now was she destined to hear another death-song or moaning cry for New England instead of Normandy ? 'Never !' was her mental reply, and to herself she vowed that the fate of Anna Strong should not be like that of Agatha Wynde. But she could do nothing then except to bow in acquiescence as she listened to Haverleigh's instructions, and from them gathered what his intentions were. Not to desert Anna absolutely ; he could not bring himself to do that, for the love he had felt for her was not yet extinct ; but she had offended him deeply, and had hurt his pride, and for the present she was a prisoner in Chateau d'Or, till such time as he chose to set her free, or 'till she recovers her reason, you know,' he said to Madame Verwest, who made no sign that she heard him, but whose face was white as ashes as she went out from his presence, and gave orders that dinner was to be served at once in the grand *salle à-manger*, which was all ablaze with wax candles and tapers when Haverleigh led

his bride thither, and gave her a place at the head of his table.

"He had found her asleep on the couch, where she had thrown herself from sheer fatigue, and for a moment had stood looking down upon her childish, beautiful face, while something like pity did for an instant stir his stony heart. But only for an instant, for when he remembered her words, 'I do not love him, and never expect to,' he hardened against her at once, and the gleam in his eye was the gleam of a madman as he touched her arm and bade her rouse herself.

"It is not necessary to describe in detail that elaborate dinner of ten courses, which was served from solid silver, with two or three servants in attendance. Haverleigh was very rich and very purse-proud, and it suited him to live like a prince wherever he was; besides, he wished to impress the simple New England girl with a sense of his greatness and wealth, and he enjoyed her evident embarrassment, or rather bewilderment, at so much glitter and display for just themselves and no one else. Anna had not forgotten her resolution to try to love him, and after their return to the *salon*, where a bright wood fire had been kindled, as the autumn night was chilly, she stole up behind him as he lounged in his easy-chair, and laying her white arms about his neck, drew his head back until her lips touched his forehead. Then she said softly and timidly:

"'Ernest, this is our first coming home, and I want to thank you for all the beautiful things with which you have

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"It was quite a speech for Anna, who stood in great fear of the man she could not understand, and who seemed to her to be possessed of two spirits, one good and one bad, and should she rouse the latter she knew it would not be in her power to cope with it. But she had no fear of rousing it now, and she felt as if turning into stone when, for reply to her caress, he sprang to his feet and placing a hand on either of her shoulders, stood looking at her with an expression in his eyes she could not meet and before which she cowered at last, and with quivering lip said to him :

"Please take your hands from my shoulders ; you hurt me, you press so hard. And why do you look so terribly at me ? You make me afraid of you, and I wanted to love you to-night. What have I done ?"

"Then he released her, and flinging her from him left the salon without a word, and she saw him no more that night. At eleven o'clock Celine came in to undress her, and when Anna managed to make her understand that she wished to know where Monsieur Haverleigh was, she only received for answer a meaning shrug and a peculiar lifting of the eyelids, which she could construe as she liked. It was not so pleasant a home-coming after all, and Anna's first night at the chateau was passed with watching and waiting, and tears, and that intense listening which tells so upon the brain. Once she thought to leave the room, but the door was bolted on the other side,

and so at last, when wearied with walking up and down the long apartment, she threw herself upon the rosewood bed and fell into a disturbed and unrestful sleep.

"Meanwhile the master—Haverleigh—was fighting a fiercer battle with himself than he had ever fought before. He had said that his mind was made up, and he was one who boasted that when once this was so nothing could turn him from his purpose; his yea was yea, and his nay, nay, but those white arms around his neck, and the touch of those fresh lips upon his forehead had not been without their effect, though the effect was like the pouring of molten lead into his veins, and had made him what, at times, he was, a mad man. When he rushed from Anna's presence, with that wild look in his eye and the raging fire in his heart, he went straight to the dark, dreary room where Agatha had died with the sweet refrain, '*Je vais revoir ma Normandie*,' upon her lips, and there amid the gloom and haunting memories of the place walked up and down the livelong night, now thinking, thinking, with head bent down, and now gesticulating in empty air with clenched fist, and again talking to himself, or rather to the spirits, good and bad, which seemed to have possession of him.

" 'Was she in earnest? Did she mean it? Is it possible that she might learn to love me through these baubles she prizes so much?' he questioned of his better nature, which replied:

" 'Try her, and see. Don't leave her here in this dreary place. Don't shut out all the gladness and sunshine

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"Just then, through the casement he had thrown open, there came a gust of the night-wind, which lifted the muslin drapery of the tall bed in the corner and swept it toward him, making him start, it was so like the white, tossing, billowy figure he had seen there once, begging him for the love of God to set her free, and let her go back to '*la belle Normandie*,' where the father was for watching her, and would welcome her home again.

"Was Agatha, the wild rose of Normandy, pleading for Anna, the singing bird from New England? Possibly; and if so, she pleaded well, and might have gained her cause if the wicked spirit had not interposed, and sneeringly repeated: 'Do not love him—shrink from his cares—can't endure to have him touch me—married him for money—can wind him round my little finger.' And that last turned the scale. No man likes to be wound round any finger, however small it may be, and Ernest Haverleigh was not an exception.

"'She shall pay for that,' he said—'shall suffer until the demon within me is satisfied, and I rather think I am possessed of the devil. Eugenie says I am, in her last interesting document,' and he laughed bitterly, as he took from his pocket a dainty little epistle, bearing the London postmark, and stepping to the window, through which the early morning light was streaming, glanced again at the letter which had been forwarded to him from Paris, and a part of which had reference to Anna.

" 'Who was the doll-faced little girl I saw with you in the carriage, and why didn't you call upon me after that day? Were you afraid to meet me, and what new fancy is this so soon after that other affair? Ernest Haverleigh I believe you are possessed with a demon, which makes you at times a maniac.'

" 'Yes, I believe I am mad. I wonder if it is in the family far back, working itself out in me?' Haverleigh said, as he stood with his eyes riveted upon the last two lines. 'Curse this woman with that spell she holds over me. If it were not for her Agatha might have been living, and I might forgive Anna, for I do believe I am nearer loving her than any woman I ever saw, and that is why I feel so bitter, so unrelenting, so determined upon revenge.'

"There were signs of waking life in and around the chateau now. The servants were astir, and so Haverleigh left the room where he had passed the night, and which since Agatha's death had borne the cognomen of 'the haunted chamber.' On the stairs he met with Madame Verwest, who stood with hands and eyes bent down, her usual attitude while receiving his orders.

"Anna was to have breakfast in her own room, he said and he waited on by Celine, and then about ten o'clock he would see her alone, for he must be off that night for Paris.

"It was a very dainty breakfast of chocolate, and fruits, and French rolls, and limpid honey and eggs which Celine took to her mistress, whom she had dressed becomingly

in a white cashmere wrapper, with broad blue sash, knotted at the side, and a blue silk, sleeveless jacket. In spite of the weary night, Anna was very beautiful that morning, though a little pale and worn, with a shadow about the eyes, which were lifted so timidly and questioningly to Haverleigh when at last he entered the salon and closed the door behind him.

"Oh, Ernest, husband!" she began; but she never called him by either of those names again, and half an hour later she lay on her face among the silken cushions of the couch, a terrified, bewildered, half-crazed creature, to whom death would have been a welcome relief just then.

"He had succeeded in making her comprehend her position fully, and in some degree to comprehend him. He was a man who never forgot and who never forgave. He had loved her, he believed; at least, he had conferred upon her the great honour of becoming his wife—had raised her from nothing to a high and dazzling position, because he liked her face and fancied she liked him. She had certainly made him think so, and he, whom many a high-born damsel of both Scotland and England had tried to captivate, had made a little Yankee shoe-stitcher Mrs. Haverleigh, and then had heard from her own lips that she married him for money, for fine dresses, and jewellery, and furniture, and horses, and carriages, and servants—and he added with an oath: 'You shall have all this. You shall have everything you married me for, except your freedom, and that you shall never have until I change my purpose;' then, without giving her a chance to speak in

her own defence, he went on to unfold his plan formed on the instant when he stood by the door in New York and heard her foolish speech to Mrs. Fleming. She was to remain at Chateau d'Or, where every possible luxury was to be hers, and where the servants were to yield her perfect obedience, except in one particular. She was never to go unattended outside the grounds, or off the little island on which the chateau stood. Monsieur Brunell, who kept the gate, would see this law enforced, as he would see to everything else. All letters which she wished to send to him or her friends would be given to Brunell's care. No other person would dare touch them, and it would be useless for her to try to persuade or bribe them, as they all feared him and would obey his orders. For society she would have Madame Verwest, and plenty of books in the library, and a splendid piano, which she would find in the same room, with a small cabinet organ for Sunday use, 'as you New Englanders are all so pious,' he added, with a sneer. Then pausing a moment, as if to rally his forces for a last blow, he said, slowly and distinctly:

"Brunell and Madame Verwest know you are my wife, but I have told them you are crazy, and that rather than send you to a lunatic asylum, I shall keep you in close confinement here for a while, unless you become furious, in which case there are plenty of places for you, not so good as this, or as much to your taste. To the other servants I make no explanations, except that you are crazy, and that it is a fancy of yours that you are not.

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This fancy they will humour to a certain extent, but you cannot bribe them. They will give you every possible attention. Celine will wait upon you as if you were a queen. You can dine in state every day, with twenty courses, if you like, and wear a new dress each time. You can drive in the grounds when it suits you, and drive alone there; but when you go outside the gates, Madame Verwest, or Celine, or some trusty person will accompany you, as it is not *safe* for a *lunatic* to go, by herself into strange quarters. At intervals, as it suits my convenience or pleasure, I shall visit you as my wife, and shall be the most devoted of husbands in the presence of the servants, who will thus give me their sympathy and wholly discredit anything you may tell them. So beat your pretty wings as you may, and break your heart as often as you like, you cannot help yourself. I am supreme here. I am your Master, and Madame Verwest says of me sometimes that I am a madman—ha, ha !'

"It was the laugh of a demon, and the look of the man was the look of a madman as he pushed from him the quivering form which had thrown itself upon the floor at his feet supplicating for pity, for pardon. He had neither, and, with a coarse laugh which echoed through the *salon* like the knell of death to all poor Anna's happiness, he left the room and she heard his heavy footsteps as he went swiftly down the stone stairway and out into the court.

"Was it a dream, a nightmare, or a horrible reality, she asked herself as she tried to recall the dreadful things he

had said to her and to understand their import. 'A prisoner, a maniac,' she whispered. 'Oh, mother, oh, Mary that I should come to this. Oh, if I could die, if I could die;' and in her anguish she looked about her for some means of ending her wretched life. Her New England training, however, was too strong for that. She dared not deliberately and suddenly die by her own hand, but if this thing were true, if she were a prisoner here with no means of escape, she would starve herself to death. They could not compel her to eat, and she would never taste food again until she knew that she was free.

"There was a murmur of voices in the court below, and a sound of wheels crushing over the gravel. Was he really going, and without her? She must know, and springing from her crouching attitude she started for the door, but found it locked from the other side it would seem, and she was a prisoner indeed, and for a time a maniac as well, if sobs and moans and piteous cries for some one to come to her aid could be called proofs of insanity. But no one came, and the hours dragged heavily on till she heard the house clock strike four, and then Celine came in to dress madame for dinner, but Anna waved her off, loathing the very thought of food—loathing the glitter and display of the day before—loathing the elegant dresses which Celine spread out before her, hoping thus to tempt her.

"'Go away, go away, or let me out,' she cried, while Celine, who could not understand a word, kept at a safe distance, eying her young mistress and thinking it very

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strange that her master should have two crazy girls in succession—poor Agatha Wynde and this fair American, who Madame Verwest said was his wife.

“‘Perhaps,’ Celine had thought with a shrug of her shoulders, ‘but, if the lady is his wife, why leave her so quick?’

“But wife or not it was Celine’s business to attend her, and she had no intention of shrinking from her duty.

“‘Poor girl, and so young,’ she thought, and she tried to quiet and conciliate her, and brought out dress after dress and held up to view, until, maddened at the sight of the finery so detestable to her now, Anna shut her eyes, and stopping her ears shrieked aloud in the utter abandonment of despair.

“‘*Mon Dieu,*’ Celine exclaimed, as she fled from the room in quest of Madame Verwest, whose face was white as marble and whose eyes had in them a look which Celine had never seen before. But she did not offer to go near the lady whom Celine represented as being so bad, nor did she see her during that day or the next. She, too was acting very queerly, the servants said to each other as they talked in whispers of the American who refused to touch a morsel of food, and who had not tasted a mouthful since the master went away.

“She was in bed now, Celine said, lying with her face to the wall, and moaning so sadly and saying things she could not understand. ‘If Madame would only go to her

and speak one word—*Anglaise*,’ she said to Madame Ver-west on the morning of the third day, and with that same white, pinched look upon her face, Madame started at last for the *salon*.



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CHAPTER III.

MADAME VERWEST AND ANNA.

“IT was now the third day since Haverleigh’s departure and Anna had adhered to her resolution not to eat or drink, hoping thus to hasten the death she so longed for, and yet dared not achieve by rasher means. Four times a day Celine had carried her the most tempting dishes which a French cook could manufacture, and tried by signs, and gestures, and a voluble rattling of her mother tongue, to persuade her mistress to eat, or, at least, sip the delicious chocolate, or *café au lait*, whose perfume itself was almost meat and drink. But all in vain. Anna neither turned her head nor spoke, but lay with her face to the wall on the massive bedstead of rosewood and gilt, whose silken and lace hangings seemed to aggravate her misery. So much grandeur, so much elegance, and she so hopeless and wretched. Oh, with what wild yearnings she thought of her New England home, and the labour she had so despised.

“Oh, mother, mother, if you only knew, but I shall never see you again. I shall die, and nobody will know.

I believe I am dying now,' she moaned, as the gnawings of hunger and thirst began to make themselves felt, and there stole over her that deathly sickness and cold, clammy sweat which so often precedes a fainting fit, or a severe attack of vomiting. 'Yes, I'm dying and I'm glad,' she whispered, as everything around her began to grow dark, and she seemed to be floating away on a billow of the sea.

"'No, you are not dying. You are only faint with hunger and excitement. Take a sip of this wine,' was spoken in her ear in a pure English accent, while a cool hand was laid kindly upon her hot, throbbing head.

"It was the English voice, the sound of home, which brought Anna back to consciousness, and turning herself quickly toward the speaker, she saw Madame Verwest bending over her, with a glass of spiced wine and some biscuits, at which she clutched eagerly, forgetful of her recent desire to die. The English voice had saved her, and a flood of tears rained over her young face as she glanced up at Madame Verwest, and met the same kind expression which had greeted her the first day of her arrival at Chateau d'Or.

"'Oh, you can speak English. You will help me to get away, to go home to mother? You'll save me from him, won't you? Why didn't you come to me before?' she cried; and raising herself in bed, she laid her head upon the bosom of the woman and sobbed convulsively. 'Are you crying, too? Crying for me?' she asked, as she felt the hot tears falling upon her hair, and drawing herself a

little from Madame Verwest, she gazed at her in astonishment, for every feature was convulsed with emotion, and the tears were running down her pallid cheeks.

"What is it? Are you a prisoner? Does he say you are crazy like me? Who are you, and why are you in this dreadful place?' Anna asked, and then Madame was herself again, and answered, calmly:

"I am Madame Verwest, Mr. Haverleigh's housekeeper, and I am here from choice. I am neither a prisoner nor crazy, but I am your friend and can help you in many ways.'

"Can you set me free; oh, can you set me free and send me home to mother?' Anna cried; but the lady shook her head.

"I dare not do that, and could not if I would. Monsieur Brunell keeps the gate, the only way of escape, and would not let you pass. I can, however, make your life more endurable while you are here; but the servants must not suspect me, that is, they must not know that I talk English so fluently. They are aware that I speak it a very little, so never expect much talking from me in their presence. But learn the French yourself at once; it will be better for you.'

"Anna was too wholly unsuspecting to think for a moment that Madame Verwest was not French, though she did wonder at the perfect ease with which she spoke English, and said to her:

"You talk almost as well as I do. Where did you learn?'

" 'I have lived three years in London and two in Edinburgh,' was the quiet reply, as the woman held the wine again to Anna's lips, bidding her drink before talking any more.

" Anna obeyed eagerly, and then continued :

" ' You lived in London three years, and in Edinburgh two. Were you with Mr. Haverleigh all the time ? '

" ' Part of the time I lived with him, and part of the time alone, though always in his employ. '

" ' You must have known him a long, long time, ' Anna rejoined. ' Tell me, then, who he is and what he is ? What kind of man, I mean ? '

" ' That is a strange question for a wife to ask concerning her husband. Who did *you* think he was, and what ? Surely your mother, if you, have one did not allow you to marry without knowing something of his antecedents, ' Madame Verwest said, and Anna coloured painfully, for she remembered well how her mother and sister both at first opposed her marrying an entire stranger of whom they knew nothing except what he said of himself.

" ' Did you know nothing of his history ? Did you not inquire ? How long had you known him, and what was he doing in your town ? ' Madame continued, and Anna replied :

" ' He was travelling for pleasure, I think, and stopped for a few days in Millfield because he liked the scenery ; then he was sick, I believe, and so staid on as everybody was kind to him and made so much of him. He came

from New York with a Mr. Stevens whom he knew and who said he was all right, and he had so much money and spent it so freely—'

" 'Yes, but what did he say of himself?' Madame persisted in asking, and Anna answered :

" 'He said he was of Scottish descent on his father's side, but born in England, at Grasmere, I think—that he left there when he was three years old—that his father died when he was twenty-two, and left him a large property which, by judicious management, had doubled in value, so that he was very rich, and that weighed so much with me, for we were poor, mother, and Mary, and Fred, who wants to go to college. I'll tell you just the truth I worked in the *shoe-shop*, and my hands were cut with the waxed ends, and my clothes smelled of leather, and I was nothing but a shop-girl, and I hated it and wanted handsome dresses, and jewellery, and money, and position, and Mr. Haverleigh could give me these, I thought, and he showed us letters from London and Liverpool, and so I married him, and he overheard what I said of him to Lucy Fleming in New York, and it made him so angry and jealous that he brought me here, and that is all. Oh Madame, tell me, please, what you know of him, and what people say of him who knew him best, and will he ever set me free ?'

"Anna asked her questions rapidly, but Madame replied in the same quiet, measured manner which marked all her movements.

" 'I think he told you truly with regard to his birth

and his money, and people who know him best say he is honest, and upright, and generous to a fault. Did he tell you anything of his mother ? He must have spoken of her.'

"Madame was the questioner now, and Anna replied :

" 'He never said much of her, nothing which I recall, but I have an impression that her family was not as good as his father's. Do you know ? Did you ever see her ?'

" 'Yes, I have seen his mother.'

" 'Oh, tell me of her, please. Was she a lady ?'

" 'Not as the English account ladies, perhaps,' Madame said, and Anna went on :

" 'Was she nice ? Was she good ?'

" 'I believe she tried to be good,' was the low-spoken answer, and Anna cried :

" 'Then there must be some good in him and sometime he'll relent and set me free. It would be so terrible to die here, and mother and Mary never know. He says I am crazy ; he has told you so, but you don't believe it ; tell me, you do not believe me mad !'

" 'Not yet, but you will be if you suffer yourself to get so fearfully excited. Be quiet and make the best of the situation, which is not without its ameliorating circumstances. Everybody will be very kind to you here, and believe me when I say it is better to live here without him, than to travel the world over with him ; so make the best of it, and at least seem to acquiesce. If you are fond of reading, there are plenty of books in the library, many of them English. There is a fine piano, too. Are you fond of music ?'

"Yes, but do not play. I always had to work, and could not afford the lessons," Anna replied, and Madame Verwest said:

"I think I can get you a teacher. I know Mr. Haverleigh will not object to that; and now you must rest—must sleep. I'll draw the curtains of the bed, and leave you alone for a time."

"There was something so soothing and reassuring in Madame's manner that Anna felt the influence, and worn out as she was and tired, she turned upon her pillow and fell into a quiet sleep which lasted till the sun went down, and the evening shadows were gathering in the room. Madame was sitting by her when she woke, and on a table at her side was a dainty supper which Celine had just brought in, and which Anna did not refuse.

"Perhaps you would like to tell me of your home in Millfield. I am always pleased to hear of foreign countries, and how the people live there," Madame Verwest said, as she saw the colour coming back to Anna's face and knew that she was stronger.

"So Anna told her of New England and her Millfield home, the hills around it and the little ponds sleeping in the valley, and the river winding its graceful way to the east, until it was lost in the noble Connecticut. And Madame Verwest listened eagerly, with a deep flush on her pallid cheek, and a bright gleam in her eye.

"And the pond lilies grow there by the old bridge, and the boat house is near by," she said, in a half-whisper,

as Anna told her of the beautiful lilies which open their petals in June, and fill the summer air with such delicious perfume.

"Why, were you ever there? Did you ever see the boat-house?" Anna asked, in some surprise, and Madame replied:

"You describe it all so vividly that I feel as if I had seen it. I love New England, and some day, perhaps—who knows—we may go there together—you and I."

"She wrung her hands nervously, like one under strong excitement, and Anna looked at her wonderingly, while she continued:

"Yes, some day we'll go away from this prison-house, but it may be long hence. He is vigilant and cunning, and mad, I believe; so be quiet, and seem to be content, nor beat your wings till you die like poor—"

"She checked herself ere the name of Agatha escaped her lips, but a new idea had crossed Anna's mind, making her unmindful of what Madame Verwest was saying. She would write at once to Millfield, telling her mother where she was, and begging her to send some one to her relief. Strange she had not thought of that before as a way of escape, and she begged Madame Verwest for the lamp and writing material, that she might at once begin the letter which was to bring relief.

"Wait till to-morrow," Madame said, 'when you will be stronger and fresher.'

"And to this Anna was finally persuaded, but early the next morning the letter was written, detailing every par-

ticular of her unhappy position, and asking her mother to send some one at once to liberate her.

"This letter she intrusted to Celine, while Madame Verwest looked pityingly on, knowing in her heart that in all human probability the letter would never reach New England, but go instead to Paris, there to be read by Haverleigh and committed to the flames.





CHAPTER IV.

THE NEWS WHICH CAME TO MILLFIELD.

"IT was Thanksgiving day, and in the little red house which Anna had once called her home, the table was laid for dinner, laid for four—Mary, Fred., and the Anna over the sea, who had never been absent before from the festival which, in New England, means so much and is kept so sacredly. They knew she would not be there, and they had grown somewhat accustomed to living without her, but on this day it was Mary's fancy to lay the table for her, to put her plate just where she used to sit, and place by it the little napkin ring of Stuart plaid which had been Fred.'s present to her on her last birthday.

" 'We'll play she is here, mother,' Mary said. 'She will be in fancy. Surely she'll remember us to-day of all days, and I know she'll wish herself here once more. How long it is now since we heard from her. Only one letter since she reached Paris. You don't suppose she is forgetting us with all the grandeur and fine things she has ?'

" 'Oh, no, Anna will never do that. She is probably too much occupied in Paris, and too happy with Mr.

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Haverleigh to write many letters,' Mrs. Strong replied, but her face belied her hopeful words.

"She had felt many misgivings with regard to Anna's marriage, and her chance for happiness with a man as cold, and proud, and reticent as Mr. Haverleigh. But it could not now be helped, and so she made the best of it, and prided herself on having a daughter abroad, and rather enjoyed the slight elevation in society which it really had given her. In the little town of Millfield it was something to be the mother of rich Mrs. Haverleigh, and to talk of my 'daughter's country-house in Scotland, and Chateau d'Or in France;' and on this Thanksgiving day the good woman wore her new black silk—Mr. Haverleigh's gift—in honour of him, and committed the extravagance of celery and cranberries, too, and wondered as she basted the turkey browning in the oven, where Anna was and what her dinner would be.

" 'Perhaps Fred. will bring us a letter. I told him to stop at the office. It is time he was here,' she said, as, her arrangements for dinner completed, she stood for a moment looking into the street, where the first snow-flakes were falling.

"Why was it that the day seemed so dreary to her, and why was there such an undefined dread of something in her heart? Was it a presentiment of the sad news coming to her so fast, borne by Fred., who appeared round a corner running rapidly, and waving his cap when he saw his mother's face at the window.

" 'Here's a letter from Anna,' he cried, as he burst into

the room, and held the precious document to sight. 'Isn't it jolly to get it on Thanksgiving day? 'Most as good as having her here. Let's keep it for the dessert!'

"But the mother could not wait, and taking the letter from her son, she glanced at the superscription, which was in Mr. Haverleigh's handwriting. But that was not strange. The other letter had been directed by him, and so she had no suspicion of the blow awaiting her as she hastily broke the seal.

"'Why, it is written by Mr. Haverleigh,' she exclaimed, and then, with Mary and Fred both looking over her shoulder, she read the following:

"'PARIS, November 10th.

"'MRS. STRONG:—*Dear Madame*:—I am sorry to be obliged to tell you the sad news about Anna, and I hope you will bear up bravely, for there is hope, and insanity is not as bad as death.'

"'Insanity,' the three whispered together, with white lips, and then read on rapidly:

"'My bright-haired darling, whom I loved so much, and who every day was growing more and more into my heart, has been very sick here in Paris, and when the fever left her her reason seemed wholly gone. The ablest physicians in France were consulted, but her case seemed to baffle all their skill, and as she constantly grew worse, they advised me, as a last resort, to place her in a private asylum, where she would have absolute quiet, together with the best and kindest of care.

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" 'I need not tell you how I shrank from such an alternative, feeling, for a time, that I would rather see my darling dead than behind a grated window ; but it was my only hope of restoring her, and as she was at times very violent and uncontrollable, I yielded at last to the judgment of others, and yesterday I took her to a private asylum in——'

" Here was a great blot, which entirely obliterated the name of the place, but in their sorrow and surprise the three did not observe it then, but read on rapidly :

" 'It is a charming spot, with lovely views. She has her own apartments, and maid, and private table, and carriage, and is surrounded by every comfort which love can devise or money buy, but oh, my heart is wrung with anguish when I think of her there, my beautiful Anna, who enjoyed everything so much. She was happy for the brief space that she was with me, and I am glad to remember that in the dreariness and darkness which have so suddenly overshadowed my life. But oh, dear madame, what can I say to comfort you, her mother. Nothing, alas, nothing, except bid you hope, as I do, that time will restore her again, and that reminds me of a question the physicians asked me. Is there insanity on either side of her family ? If not, her recovery is certain. Meanwhile, do not be troubled about her treatment ; it will be the tenderest and best, as I know her doctor and nurse personally, and money will secure everything but happiness. It is not thought advisable for me to see her often, but I shall keep myself thoroughly informed

with regard to her condition, and report to you accordingly.

"The last time Anna was out with me before her sickness, she saw and greatly admired an oil painting from a scene among the mountains of the Tyrol. It reminded her, she said, of New England, and the view from the hills across the river in Millfield. Recently I have seen the picture again, and remembering that she said, "Oh, how I wish mother and Mary could see it," I purchased it, and yesterday it started for America, marked to your address. In the same box is a porcelain picture of Murillo's Madonna (the one in the Louvre gallery), and I send it because it bears a strong resemblance to Anna, as I have seen her in white dressing-gown, with her hair unbound, her hands folded upon her breast, and her sweet face upturned to the evening sky, which she loved to contemplate, because she said, "the same moon and stars were shining down on you." I hope you will like them, and accept them as coming—the painting from Anna, and the Madonna from me. Should you ever be in need of money, I beg you will command me to any extent, for I desire to be to you a son for the sake of the daughter I have taken from you.

"As I may not be in Paris the entire winter, direct to Munroe & Co., and your letters will be forwarded,

"Very truly, dear madam, yours,

"ERNEST HAVERLEIGH."

"This was the letter received at the red house that Thanksgiving day, and for a time the mother and sister

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felt that Anna was as surely lost to them as if she had been lying dead in some far-off grave across the sea. There was no insanity in the family on either side that Mrs. Strong had ever heard of, and that gave them a little hope, but their hearts were aching with a bitter pain as they sat down to the dinner, which was scarcely touched, so intent were they upon the sorrow, which had come so suddenly. It was terrible to think of their beautiful Anna as a maniac, confined behind bars and bolts, and so far away from home.

"'If we could only see her,' Mary said, while Fred suggested going to France himself to find her if she did not recover soon.

"'Where is she? Where did Mr. Haverleigh say the asylum was?' he asked, and then reference was had to the letter, but the name of the place was wholly unintelligible, and after trying in vain to make it out, they gave it up, and gathered what comfort they could from the apparent kindness and cordiality evinced in Mr. Haverleigh's letter, so different from his cold, proud manner when there, Mrs. Strong remarked, and she felt her love go out toward him as to a son, and before she slept that night she wrote him a long letter, which contained many messages of love for poor Anna, and thanks to himself for his kindness and interest in her sorrowing family.

"That night there was a Thanksgiving party in the ball-room of the village hotel. It had been the custom to have one there for years, and heretofore Anna Strong had been the very prettiest girl present, and the one most

sought for in the games we played and the merry dance. But that night she was not with us, and the news that she was insane, and the inmate of a mad-house, came upon us with a heavy shock, saddening our spirits and casting a gloom over the gay scene. Poor Anna! How little we guessed the truth, or dreamed how many, many times that day her thoughts had been with us, or how, until the last ray of sunset faded, she had stood by the window of her room looking to the west, as if, with the departing daylight, she would send some message to her far-off home.



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CHAPTER V.

THE NEWS WHICH CAME TO CHATEAU D'OR.

“**M**ONSIEUR BRUNELL had received a telegram saying that M. Haverleigh would visit the chateau the following day, and both Anna and Madame Verwest had received letters apprising them of his homecoming, and bidding the one see that a grand dinner was in readiness for him, and the other to array herself in her most becoming attire, as befitted a wife about to receive her husband after a separation of many months. To Anna this visit seemed more awful than anything she had yet experienced at the chateau, for as a whole her life there had not been without its pleasures. Acting upon Madame Verwest's advice, she had tried to make the best of her position, and in acquiring the language and a knowledge of music, she had found a solace for many a weary hour which otherwise would have hung heavily upon her hands. She was fond of French and music, and had developed a remarkable talent for them both, while in the well-selected library she had found a delight she had never thought she could find in books. Madame Verwest was herself a good scholar and a clear reasoner and thinker,

and in her constant companionship Anna was rapidly developing into a self-reliant woman, capable of thinking and acting for herself. She had long since given up all hope of hearing from home, unless she could find some other method of communication than through the medium of Monsieur Brunell, who took charge of every letter from the chateau, and who, when questioned upon the subject as to why no answer ever came to her, always replied that he did not know, unless her letters were lost on the voyage. He always deposited them in the post, and more than that he could not do. It was in vain that Anna had tried other methods of getting her letters to the post. It could not be done, even through Madame Verwest, who said always, 'I would so gladly, but I dare not.'

"And so, though letter after letter had been written home, there had come to her no reply, and she guessed pretty accurately that her letters were sent directly to her husband, who, of course, destroyed them. A prisoner for life she began to fear she was, and sometimes beat her wings cruelly against her gilded cage. Haverleigh had kept his word, and every luxury in the way of service, elegant dress, and furniture was hers. All the servants were respectful and attentive, while Celine was her devoted slave. Anna could talk with her now tolerably well, and the first use she made of her knowledge was an effort to convince her maid of her sanity, and that she was kept a prisoner there to suit the whim of her husband, whom she represented as a dreadful man. But to this Celine gave no credence, though she at first smilingly as-

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sented to her young mistress' assertion, as if it were a part of her business to humour every fancy of the poor lunatic. Once Anna was more earnest than usual, and begged her maid to say if she believed her crazy.

" ' *Oui, oui*,' Celine answered, vehemently, 'I must think it, else why are you here, shut up from the world and Paris, and monsieur is far too kind, too fond to imprison Madame for naught, and yet——'

" Here Celine paused a moment, as if a new idea had just occurred to her, and then she continued:

" 'And yet it is a little strange that mademoiselle Agatha should be crazy, too, like you, and like you shut up here.'

" 'Who was Agatha?' Anna asked; and then, little by little, she heard the story of the poor young girl from Normandy, who had died in what Celine called the 'Ghost Room,' with the words, '*Je vais revoir ma Normandie*' on her lips.

" 'She haunts the room still,' Celine said; 'and often on stormy nights, when the wind howls round the old chateau, we hear her voice singing of Normandy. You see, that was her home, and she thought she was going back to see it again. Oh, but she was pretty, much like Madame; only she was mademoiselle—no wedding ring, for true—no priest—and she was not lady, like you Americaine. She was people—very people.'

" This was Celine's version of the story, and that night Anna heard from Madame Verwest more of poor Agatha, who believed herself a wife, and who went really mad

when she found that she was not. If any thing had been wanting to complete Anna's loathing and horror of her husband, this story would have accomplished it. That he was a demon in human form, as well as a madman, she had no doubt, and there gradually crept into her heart a fear lest she, too, like Agatha of Normandy, would die in that dreary house. Still youth is hopeful, and Anna was young and cheered by the courage of Madame Verwest, who was to her more like a mother than a servant, she found herself constantly forming plans for escape from the chateau. When she received her husband's letter, telling her he was coming, her first and predominant feeling was one of horror and dread; but anon there arose in her mind a hope that he might be coming to release her, or at least to take her with him to Paris, and once there she would fall in with Americans or English, and through them obtain her freedom.

"With this end in view she determined to make herself as attractive and agreeable as possible to the man she detested, and on the day when he was expected she suffered Celine to dress her in one of the many gowns which she had never worn, for it had hitherto seemed worse than folly to array herself in laces, and silks, and jewels for her solitary meals. But to-day there was a reason for dressing, and she bade Celine do her best, and when that best was done and she saw herself in the glass, a picture of rare loveliness in blue satin and lace, with pearls on her neck and arms, something of her old vanity awoke within

her, and she found herself again wishing that her friends at home could see her.

"In the kitchen below all was bustle and expectation for whatever Ernest Haverleigh might be to others, he was exceedingly popular with his servants, and not a man or woman of them but would have walked through fire and water to serve him. In the dining salon the table was set for dinner as it never had been laid since the first night of Anna's arrival at Chateau d'Or, more than five months ago. And Anna glanced in there once as she was passing the door, and felt herself grow sick and faint as she saw the costly array, and remembered what it was for.

"At half-past five the train was due, and just as the little silver clock chimed the half hour, the whistle was heard, and from the window where she had so often watched the sun setting she saw the long train moving off towards Marseilles, and a few moments after the sound of carriage wheels in the court below told her that her husband had come. She did not go to meet him, but with clasped hands and rapidly beating heart stood waiting for him just where he left her months before, terrified, bewildered, crouching upon the couch, with her face hidden in her hands. Now she stood erect, with an unnatural brightness in her blue eyes, and a flush on her cheeks, which deepened to scarlet as her ear caught the sound of heavy footsteps, and she knew he was coming.

"The next moment he opened the door, and started involuntarily, as if he had not been prepared to see her

thus. He had not expected to find her so beautiful and so matured. He had left her a timid, shrinking girl; he found her a woman, with that expression upon her face which only experience or suffering brings. His rôle had been all marked out and arranged. He should find her tearful, reproachful, desperate possibly, and that would suit him well, and make her insanity more probable to his servants, while he would be the patient, enduring, martyr-husband, humouring her like a child, and petting her as he would pet a kitten which scratched and spit at his caresses. How then was he disappointed, when, with a steady step, she crossed the room to meet him, and offered her hand as quietly and self-possessed, to all appearance, as if he had been a stranger seeking audience of her.

“*Ma precieuse, ma belle reine*, how charming I find you, and how delighted I am to see you looking so well,” he exclaimed, as he encircled her in his arms as lovingly as if she had been the bride of yesterday.

“Oh, how she loathed his caresses, and felt her blood curdling in her veins as he pressed kiss after kiss upon her cheek and lips, and called her his darling and pet, and asked if she were glad to see him again. She could not tell him a lie, and she dared not tell the truth, but her eyes told it for her, and he saw it at once, and said in a deprecating tone:

“What! not glad to see me when I have lived in the anticipation of this meeting ever since I parted with you last autumn. Why then didn’t I come before? you may

ask. Business before pleasure, you know, and then I hoped that perfect quiet in this lovely retreat would go far toward restoring you. *Eh, ma petite.* How is it, are you any better here?' And he touched his forehead significantly.

"That exasperated Anna, who for a moment, lost her self-control, and releasing herself from him, stepped backward, and with a proud gesture of her head, exclaimed:

"'Have done with that. You know I am not crazy, and you shall not stay in my presence if you insult me thus!'

"She was very beautiful then, and for a moment Haverleigh felt a wave of his old love or passion sweeping over him as he stood looking at her; then the demon within whispered of that day in New York, and the words he overheard, and he was himself again, her jailor and master rather than her lover and husband.

"'Ha, my pretty pet,' said he, 'and so you are mistress here, and can refuse or permit my presence as you please. So be it then, and if it suits you better to be sane, why sane you are to me at least. But, Mrs. Haverleigh, joking aside, I am glad to see you, and I think you greatly improved, and I come in peace and not in war, and if you incline to the latter, I would advise a change in your programme. Upon my soul, you *are* charming.'

"He drew her to him again, and she suffered his kisses in silence, and did not even shrink from him when in the presence of Celine he drew her down upon his knee, and called her his angel and dove. But the colour had all

faded from her cheeks, and left her very pale, while her hands shook so that she could scarcely manage her soup, when at last dinner was announced, and he led her to the dining salon. He was all attention to her, and a stranger watching him would have thought him the most devoted of husbands, but to Anna there was something disgusting and terrible in his manner which she knew was assumed as a means of deceiving the servants, who pitied their master for being so unfortunately married.

"When dinner was over, and they had returned to the salon, Anna could restrain herself no longer, but going up to her husband startled him with the question:

"There is something I must ask you, and for the love of heaven answer me truthfully. I have written home seven times since you left me here last October, but have never received a word in reply. Tell me, do you think my letters ever crossed the sea? Did mother ever get them?"

"For an instant the hot blood flamed up in Mr. Haverleigh's face, and his eyes fell beneath the steady gaze fixed so searchingly upon him. Anna knew that her suspicions were correct, and that her letters had never gone to America, and the lie he told her did not in the least shake her belief.

"Do I think your mother ever got them?" he repeated, at last. "She must have gotten some of them, and some may have been lost. You gave them to Brunell?"

"Yes, always to Brunell. No one else would touch them, and I was never allowed to post one myself. Why

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not? Why am I treated so like a prisoner? Why do you keep me here? Surely I have been sufficiently punished for the foolish words you overheard. Forgive me for them. Try me again. Let me go with you to Paris, when you return. I shall die here or go mad. Don't drive me to that. Oh, let me go away somewhere. Let me go home—back to mother.'

"She was kneeling now at his feet, and he was looking down upon her with a strange glitter in his eye. Then the look softened, and there was unutterable tenderness in the tone of his voice as he stooped to raise her, and leading her to the couch, said to her pityingly:

" 'Poor child, you don't know what you ask. You have no home to go to. Your mother is dead—died suddenly—and in kindness to you I have withheld your sister's letter, wishing to spare you pain, but I have it with me. Can you read it now?'

"He held a worn-looking envelope toward her, but for a moment she did not see it. The blow had fallen so suddenly, and was so terrible in its magnitude, that for a brief space both sight and sense failed her, and she sat staring blankly into his face as if she neither saw nor heard. After a moment, however, her eyes relaxed from their stony expression; there was a quivering of the lips, a rapid heaving of the chest, and then in a voice her husband would never have recognised as hers, she said:

" 'Give me the letter, please. I can read it now.'

"He gave it to her, and holding it mechanically in her hand she studied the address, in her sister's handwrit-

ing: 'ERNEST HAVERLEIGH, ESQ., PARIS, FRANCE. *Care of Munroe & Co.*' The date upon the back was Dec. 8th, and there was the dear old Millfield post-mark seeming to bring her so near her home, and making her heart throb wildly in her throat, where was a strange sense of suffocation. At last, when every part of the soiled envelope had been studied, she slowly opened it and drew forth the sheet folded inside. Then the look of anguish on her face gave way to one of perplexity as she said:

"Look, this is not Mary's letter. It is from your agent in Scotland."

"My agent in Scotland! Not Mary's letter! What do you mean?" Mr. Haverleigh asked, and taking the paper from her he saw that she was right, and that he held a communication from his Scottish steward regarding his estate in the Highlands. "What can this mean? I don't understand?" he said, and seemed to be intently thinking; then suddenly he added: "Oh, I believe I know how the mistake occurred. This from McKenzie I received the same day with the one from your sister, and instead of putting the latter in this envelope, as I meant to do, I tore it up, as I do all my letters of no importance, and put this in its place. I am sorry, but I can give you the particulars. Can you bear it now? There, lay your head against my arm, you look so white and strange."

"He sat down beside her, and drawing her to him made her lean against him while he told her how her mother, after an unusually hard day's work, had sickened suddenly and died within three days, peacefully, happily with a

message of love on her lips for her absent daughter. After the funeral was over, yielding to the earnest solicitations of a lady who was visiting in Millfield, Mary had decided to rent the house and go West with the woman as governess for her children. Fred., too, had accompanied them, as there was in the place a good school, where he could finish his education for college. The name of the lady Mr. Haverleigh could not recollect, except that it was something like Creydock or Heydock, while the town he had quite forgotten, and could by no means recall. It was very unfortunate, that mistake about the letters, and he was so sorry, he kept reiterating; but Anna did not seem to hear, or if she did, she did not care. She only was conscious of the fact that her mother was dead, her home broken up, and all hope of help from that quarter cut off. The effect was terrible, and even her husband was alarmed when he saw how white and motionless she sat, with her hands dropped helplessly at her side. Bad as he was, he did not wish her to die then and there, and he tried to move her from her state of apathy; but she only answered, 'Please go away. I want to be alone.'

"He made her lie down on the couch, and to this she did not object, but like a tired child, laid her head among the soft silken cushions, and with a long, low gasping sob, closed her eyes wearily, as if to shut out all sight of everything. Madame Verwest and Celine were sent to her, and were told of the sad news which had so affected her, and one believed it, and the other did not; but both were unremitting in their attentions to the poor heart-broken girl,

who gave no sign that she knew what they were doing or saying to her, except to moan, occasionally: 'Oh, my mother is dead! my mother is dead.'

"Mr. Haverleigh, too, was exceedingly kind, and very lavish with his caresses, which Anna permitted in a dumb, passionless kind of way, like one who could not help herself. Once, when he stroked her long bright hair, she lifted her mournful eyes to him, and asked. 'Won't you take me from here? Won't you let me go back to where you found me? I can take care of myself; I can work in the shop again, and after a while you will be free from me. Will you let me go?'

"*Free from her!* Did he wish to be that? For a moment, when he remembered the glittering black eyes, the only eyes in the world which had the power to make him quail, he half believed he did. On his return to Paris he had met the woman with the glittering eyes, which seemed to read his very soul, and ferret out his inmost thoughts. There had been a stormy scene, for Eugenie Arschinard was not one to brook a rival. She had compassed the ruin of poor Agatha of Normandy, whom, but for her, Haverleigh might have dealt fairly with, and made the marriage tie more than a mere farce, a horrid mockery. From his town-house in London, Eugenie had seen the young, fair-haired girl driving by and looking so eagerly at the place, and with her thorough knowledge of the world, she knew her to be an American, and guessed her to be some new flame whom he had lured from home, as the plaything of an hour. She never for a moment be-

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lieved him married; he was not a marrying man; he dared not marry, bound as he was to her by the tie of honour, which, in her infidel heart, she held above the marriage vow. So when she met him in Paris by appointment, she charged him with his new fancy, demanding who and where she was, and he was a very coward in her presence, and dared not tell her the truth of that simple wedding among the New England hills, but suffered her to believe that Anna, like Agatha, was only his dupe, whom he could cast off at pleasure. Eugenie had no wish, at present, to be bound herself. She was true to Haverleigh, and she enjoyed to the full the luxuries with which he surrounded her, and in Paris, where such connections were common, she had her circle of friends, and reigned among them a queen because of Haverleigh's name and the style in which she lived. By and by, when she was older, and ceased to attract admiration, she meant to marry him and so pass into a respectable old age, but just now her freedom suited her best, and she gave no sign of her real intentions for the future. But Haverleigh knew well that to confess he had a wife was to raise a storm he had not courage to meet, and so he told her the girl she had seen was a little wild rose from America, whom he had lifted from poverty and taken to Chateau d'Or.

"You know I must have something to amuse me when I am at that dreary place, and Anna does as well as any one. A little washed-out, spiritless body of whom you need not be jealous."

"This he had said to Eugenie, and then had bought her the diamond set at Tiffany's which she had admired so much, had driven with her in the Bois de Boulogne, and afterwards dined with her in the little fairy palace just off the Champs Elysées, her home, of which she had the title-deed in her possession. And yet, in his heart, Ernest Haverleigh respected Anna far more than he did this woman, who so fascinated and enthralled him, for though Anna had come to him with a lie on her lips, and a lie in her heart, and had wounded his self-love cruelly, she was pure and womanly, while Eugenie was steeped to the dregs in sin and in intrigue.

"But she ruled him completely, and if he had desired he did not dare take Anna back with him to Paris and present her as his wife, and he was not bad enough to cast upon her publicly the odium of being his mistress. Neither would he send her back to America, for there was no pretext whatever by which he could be free from the bond which held him her husband. She had plenty of pretexts, he had none. He could not let her go, and besides, he was conscious of a real interest in her, a something which fascinated him, and made him wish to keep her at Chateau d'Or, where he, and he alone, could see her at his will. Some time, perhaps, when Eugenie was less troublesome, he might take her away, but not now, and when she said to him so pleadingly, 'Will you let me go home?' he answered her very gently, 'Poor child, you have no home to go to in America. Your home is here, with me. Not always Chateau d'Or, for some time I mean

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to take you with me. I cannot do so now for certain reasons, but by and by—so be patient, and wait for the happiness in store.'

"A shudder was Anna's only answer, as she turned her face away from him and wished that she might die. For five weeks Mr. Haverleigh remained at the chateau, devoting himself entirely to Anna, who, while shrinking with intense disgust from his caresses, permitted them because she must. To Madame Verwest he was very distant and cold, treating her civilly, it is true, but always in a manner which showed how wide was the distance between them. He was master, she was servant, and he made her feel it keenly. Once, however, when she came suddenly upon him as he sat alone in his room, she laid her hand on his arm, and asked :

" 'How long is this to go on ?'

" 'What to go on ?' he replied, savagely, and she continued :

" 'This horrid life of sin and deception. You know the girl's mother is not dead.'

" 'It's a lie !' he cried, springing to his feet. 'A lie—I swear it to you ! And you shall not interfere, or if you do, by ——'

"There was a frightful oath as he threatened the trembling woman, who did not speak again while he went on :

" 'I am beginning to love her once more ; to feel a real interest in her. I find her greatly improved, thanks to you, I suppose. A few months more of seclusion, and I

shall introduce her to the world ; but I will not have her family hanging on me—a set of low Yankees, working in shoe-shops, teaching school, and making dresses for the rabble.’

“ ‘Is not her family a good one, then ?’ Madame Ver-west asked, and he replied :

“ ‘Good enough for its kind, for aught I know. No stain, unless it be the half-sister or something of the father, who went to the bad, they say—ran off with a Boston man, who never meant to marry her, and the natural consequence, of course.’

“ ‘Where is this woman ?’ Madame asked, and he replied :

“ ‘Dead, I believe, or ought to be. Why should such women live ?’

“ ‘Yes, oh, why ?’ was answered sadly in Madame’s heart ; but she made no response, and when her tyrant of a master motioned her to the door in token that the interview was ended, she went out without a word.

“ Three days later he left the chateau, saying he should come again in September or October, and possibly bring people with him. Madame Arschinard, a lady of high position and great wealth, had long wished to visit Southern France, and he might perhaps invite her down with other friends, and fill the chateau.

“ ‘And you, my little white rose,’ he said to Anna, ‘I want you to get your colour back, and be like your old self, for I shall wish my wife not to be behind Parisian beauties. I shall send you the very latest styles. Worth

has your number, I believe. And now good-bye, my pet. Take care of yourself, and if——'

"He bent down to her, and whispered something in her ear which turned her face to scarlet, and made her involuntarily exclaim:

"Oh, anything but that—anything but that!"





CHAPTER VI.

IN THE AUTUMN.

"THE summer had gone by—a long, bright beautiful summer so far as sunny skies, and fair flowers, and singing birds, and fresh, green grass could make it bright and beautiful; but to Anna, still watching drearily the daylight fading in the western sky, and whispering messages for the sun to carry to the dear ones across the water, it had dragged heavily, and not all Madame Verwest's love and petting which were given without stint to the poor girl, had availed to win her back to the comparatively cheerful state of mind she had been in before receiving the sad news of her mother's death.

"She had ceased writing to America; that was useless, she knew. Her letters would never reach there, and she had ceased to expect any news from home, for however often Mary or Fred. might write, their letters would never come to her. Of this she was convinced, and she gradually settled into a state of hopeless apathy, taking little or no interest in anything, except poor Agatha's grave.

"She had found it in a little inclosure on the island, which held Chateau d'Or, choked with tall grass and weeds,

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and smothered by the drooping branches of the pine and willow which overshadowed it and hid from view the plain white stone on which was simply inscribed, 'Agatha, aged 20.' Nothing to tell when she died, or where, or where her home had been, and what her life. But Anna knew now all the sad story of the sweet peasant-girl lured from her home by promises of a marriage, which did take place at last, but with a flaw in it which made it illegal, and poor Agatha no wife. Then, when reparation had been refused, she had held herself as pure and spotless as was Eve when she came first from the hands of her Creator, but had gone mad with shame and remorse, and died at Chateau d'Or, with a song of Normandy on her lips.

"With the help of Celine, the weeds and grass were cleared away from the neglected yard, which, as the summer advanced, grew bright with flowers and vines, and was Anna's favourite resort. Here she would sit for hours with her head bent down, thinking sadly of the past, and wondering what the future, which many a young wife would have looked forward to eagerly, might have in store for her. When first there dawned upon her the possibility that another life than her own might be intrusted to her keeping, she had recoiled with horror, feeling that she could not love the child of which Ernest Haverleigh was father; then there crept over her a better, softer feeling, which was succeeded by a presentiment which grew to a certainty that both would die, mother and little one, and be buried by Agatha; there was just room between her grave

and the fence, room in length and breadth both, for she had lain herself down in the grass and measured the space with her own person. She would have a headstone, too, like Agatha, with 'Anna, aged 19' on it, and in the other world, far away from Chateau d'Or, she might perhaps meet Agatha some day, and with her recount the sorrows they had borne, and which had helped to fit them for the eternal home, where Anna hoped now and believed she would go. Sorrow had brought her to her Saviour's feet, and she felt that whether she lived or died it would be well with her.

"Occasionally her husband had written to her, short but kind letters and once or twice, when he had asked her some direct questions she had answered him, but nothing he might now do could ever awaken in her a single throb of affection for him, and when there came to her from Paris several boxes of dresses, Worth's very latest styles, she felt no gratitude to the giver, and when a day or two after his letter arrived, telling her of his intention to fill the chateau with company, and expressing a wish that she should look her best, as some of the guests would be ladies of cultivation and taste, she experienced only feelings of aversion and dread in view of the coming festivities. The servants, on the contrary, were delighted. There had been no company at the chateau for years, and now it was a pleasant excitement, opening the chambers long shut up, airing linen, uncovering furniture, sorting silver, hunting up receipts, making jellies, and cakes, and sweetmeats, and speculating as to who was coming and

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what they would wear. Madame Arschinard was certain, for Monsieur Haverleigh had written Madame Verwest to that effect, and the largest and best sleeping room was to be hers, and the finest saddle-horse, and her maid was to have the large closet adjoining her room, so as to be always within call, and madame was talked up and speculated upon almost as much as if it had been the empress herself expected at the chateau, instead of the woman who had originated this visit and insisted upon it, partly because she wanted change, and partly because she knew that at Chateau d'Or was the fair-haired American of whom she had caught a glimpse in London. She had often questioned Mr. Haverleigh sharply with regard to Anna, and at last, after a hot and angry quarrel, she had wrung from him the fact that in an inadvertent hour he had married the little New England girl, who recently had become hopelessly insane, and immured within the walls of Chateau d'Or. At first Eugenie's rage had been something fearful, and even Haverleigh had trembled at her violence. After a little, however, when the first shock was over, she grew more calm, and began more rationally to consider the situation, which was not so bad after all. True, she could not marry him now herself, should such a fancy take her; but she had not by any means lost her power over him or any part of it. He spent his money for her as freely, and was quite as devoted to her as he had been before he saw this American, who had conveniently gone crazy, and was kept so close at Chateau d'Or. In her heart Eugenie did not quite believe in the insanity, though it suited her to

have it so, and she was very anxious to see one who in a way was a kind of rival to her, so she proposed and insisted upon the visit to the chateau, and chose her own companions, three of them ladies of her own rank in life, and six of them young men who were all in a way her satellites, and would do to play off against each other when there was nothing better for amusement.

"To these people Mr. Haverleigh had explained that there was a Mrs. Haverleigh, a sweet, unfortunate young creature, who was hopelessly insane. She was perfectly harmless, and quiet, and ladylike, he said, and might easily be taken for a rational woman, unless she got upon the subject of her sanity. Then she would probably declare that she was sane, and that she was kept at Chateau d'Or against her will, and that her friends knew nothing of her fate, as none of her letters ever reached them, and none of their's reached her. Of course, all this was false, he said, as she was free to write as often as she pleased, while he always showed her whatever he thought she ought to see from home. When the sad news of her mother's death reached him, he had withheld it for a time, thinking it better so, but he had told her at last, and the result was, as he had feared, an aggravation of her malady, and a state of deep despondency from which she was seldom roused. He did not know what effect so much gaiety and dissipation would have upon her, but he hoped the best, and trusted to their good sense not to talk with her of her trouble, or to credit anything she might say with regard to him. He repeated all this with a most

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grieved expression upon his face, as if his burden was almost heavier than he could bear, and the younger ladies were deeply sorry and pitiful for the man upon whose life so great a blight had fallen.

"Eugenie Arschinard, who knew him so well, kept her own counsel, but of the four ladies none were half as anxious to see Anna Haverleigh as herself. It was late one lovely September afternoon when the guests arrived at the chateau, where all was in readiness for them, and Madame Verwest, in her black silk and laces, stood waiting for them, courtseying respectfully as they were presented to her, and then conducting them to their several rooms. Anna was not present to receive them. She preferred not to see them until dinner, and stood waiting for her husband in the salon. She had not been permitted to wear mourning for her mother, as she wished to do, but on this occasion she was dressed in a black silk grenadine, with puffings of soft illusion lace at her neck and wrists, while her only ornaments were a necklace and earrings of jet. To relieve the sombreness of this attire, Celine had fastened in her bright, wavy hair a beautiful blush rose, which was far more effective than any costly ornament could have been, and had Anna studied her toilet for a month she could not have chosen a more becoming one, or one which better pleased her fastidious lord. She was beautiful as she stood before him with that pale, pen-sive style of beauty so attractive to most men, and as he held her in his arms he felt, for a few moments, how far superior she was to the brazen, painted women he had

brought there as her associates, and for half an instant he resolved to keep her from them, lest so much as their breath should fall upon and contaminate her in some way. But it was too late now. She must meet them day after day, and he must see her with them, and go on acting his false part, and make himself a still greater villain, if possible, than ever. But he would be very kind to her, and deferential, too, especially before Eugenie, whom for the time being he felt that he hated with a most bitter hatred, not only for what she was, but for the power she had over him. How gorgeous she was at dinner in her dress of crimson satin, with lace overskirt, and diamonds flashing on her neck and arms, and how like a queen, or rather like the mistress of the house, she carried herself among her companions as they stood in the grand salon waiting for Mrs. Haverleigh, the younger portion speculating upon the probabilities of her acting rationally in their presence, while she, Eugenie, listened to their speculations with a scornful curl on her lip, and an increased glitter in her black eyes.

"There was the sound of soft, trailing garments on the stairs, and Eugenie drew her tall figure to its full height, and tossed her head proudly as Anna entered the room, a graceful little creature, with a tint of the sun on her wavy hair, a faint flush on her cheeks, and the purity of her complexion heightened by the colour of her dress. And still she was not a child, for the woman was stamped in every lineament, and shone in the blue eyes she bent so curiously on the guests, as, one by one, they

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gathered around her to be presented. And Anna received them graciously, and welcomed them to the chateau, which, she said, would be pleasanter for having them there.

“‘You must be often very lonely living here alone so much,’ Eugenie said to her, and instantly the great blue eyes, which had been scanning her so curiously, filled with tears, and the sweet voice was inexpressibly sad which replied :

“‘Oh, you don’t know how lonely.’

“It was long since Eugenie Arschinard had felt a throb of anything like kindly pity for anyone; but there was something in Anna’s face and Anna’s eyes which struck a chord she had thought stilled forever, and brought back a wave of memory which shook her, for an instant, like a tempest, and made her grow faint and weak before this woman she had meant to hate. Years ago, before Eugenie Arschinard was the woman she was now, she had loved a young half-sister with all the intensity of her strong, passionate nature, and loved her the more for having had the care of her from the time her first wailing cry echoed through the chamber of the dying mother. For this child Eugenie had toiled and denied herself, and gone without sufficient food that the little one might be daintily clothed and fed on delicacies. Then, in an unlucky hour, Eugenie went to Paris to make her fortune as a milliner, and get a home for the young girl growing each day more and more beautiful. But before that home was made Eugenie’s brilliant beauty had been her ruin, and she

would not bring her sister into the tainted atmosphere of her world.

"The glamour of Haverleigh's love and money was in its freshness, and in her intoxication she forgot everything else until there came a terrible awakening, and she heard that '*La Petite*,' as she called her sister, had left her home with a stranger, and gone no one knew whither, or whether for good or bad. Then for a time the fairy palace off the Champs Elysees was closed, while Eugenie, maddened and remorseful, sought far and near for traces of *La Petite*, but sought in vain, and after many weeks she returned to her home and life in Paris, gayer, more reckless than ever, but with a pain in her heart which never left her for a moment.

"Time passed on till more than a year was gone, and then she heard from the gray-haired father at home that in a roundabout way, which he nevertheless felt to be reliable, tidings had come to him of *La Petite's* death, though how she died or where he did not know.

"There were very uncomfortable days for Ernest Haverleigh, who, never having heard Eugenie mention her sister, did not know she had one, and could not guess of the bitter grief which consumed her day and night, and made her sometimes like a raging animal in her hatred of all mankind.

"It was at that time that Mr. Haverleigh, finding no comfort with Eugenie, had decided to visit America, and leave the lady to herself until she was in a better frame of mind. He had found her better on his return, and

furiously jealous of Anna, whom she wished so much to see, and whom, when she saw, she felt herself drawn strangely toward, because of a resemblance to the dear little sister dead, she knew not where.

"Mr. Haverleigh had dreaded this meeting between the eagle and the dove, as he mentally styled the two women who were bound to him, one by the tie of marriage, the other by the so-called tie of honour. Would the eagle tear the dove, he wondered, and he watched them curiously as they met, marvelling much at Eugenie's manner, and the pallor which showed itself even through her paint. Anna had either made a favourable impression, or else Eugenie thought her too insipid to be considered as a rival for a moment. In either case he was pleased to know that there was not to be war between the two ladies, and with this load off his mind he became the most urbane and agreeable of hosts.

"It was a very merry dinner party, for the guests were all young and in the best of spirits, and the light jest and gay repartee passed rapidly around the board. Only Anna was quiet. She did not understand French well enough to catch readily what they said, especially when they talked so rapidly, and so many at a time. But she was a good listener, and tried to seem interested and smile in the right place, and she looked so girlish and pretty, and did her duties as hostess so gracefully, that her husband felt proud of her, while every man at the table pronounced her perfect, and every woman charming.

"Those October days at Chateau d'Or were very pleas-

ant, for Mr. Haverleigh was a good host, and his guests knew well how to entertain themselves, so that from early morning into the small hours of night there was no cessation of pleasure and revelry. But Anna did not join in the dissipation. She was not at all strong, and in the freedom of intercourse between these volatile, unprincipled French people she saw much to censure and shock her and shrunk from any familiarity with them. This reticence on her part was attributed to her supposed malady, which made her melancholy, the ladies thought, and after a few ineffectual efforts to draw her into their circle, they gave it up, and suffered her to remain quietly in her room.

"Eugenie, however, often sought her society, attracted by the look in her face to the lost one, and by a desire to see how far the story of her insanity was true, and to know something of her early history. But it was not until the party had been at the chateau for three weeks and were beginning to talk of going back to Paris, or still farther south to Nice or Mentone, that an opportunity for the desired interview presented itself.



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CHAPTER VII.

EUGENIE AND ANNA.

"IT had been Anna's daily custom to steal away after lunch to her favourite resort, the little yard where Agatha was buried, and where one of the servants had built her a rustic seat beneath the trees, and here Eugenie found her one afternoon, and leaning over the iron fence, asked her if she might come in, and next whose grave it was. From where she stood she could not see the name upon the headstone, but when Anna answered, 'It is the grave of the young girl who is said to haunt the chateau; you have heard the absurd story, of course,' she was interested at once, for she had heard from her maid something of a ghost whose plaintive cry for home was heard wailing through the long, dark corridors, and in the lonely rooms, especially on stormy nights when the wind was high, and shook the massive walls of the chateau. Eugenie was not at all superstitious, and knowing that nearly every old place like Chateau d'Or had its ghost and ghost-room, she had paid no attention to the tale as told her by Elise, but when it assumed a tangible form in the shape of a real grave, her curiosity was roused, and without



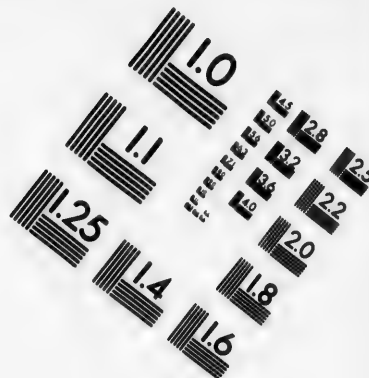
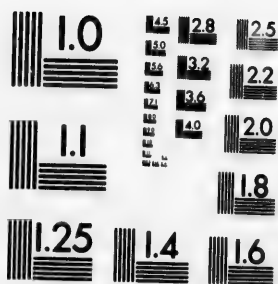


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waiting for Anna's permission she passed through the gate, and going round to the seat where Anna sat, said :

" ' Then there was a girl who died and was buried here ? Who was she ? Do you know ? ' "

" ' It was before I came,' Anna answered, ' and I only know that she was sick—crazy, they said, from some great wrong done to her, and quite up to her death she kept singing of her home in Normandy.' "

" ' Normandy ! Did you say she came from Normandy ? What was her name ? ' Eugenie asked, but before Anna could answer, she bent down and read ' Agatha, aged 20.' "

" ' Agatha ! ' she repeated, as she grasped the headstone and stood with her back to Anna, who thus did not see the corpse-like pallor which spread all over her face as a horrible suspicion passed through her mind. ' Agatha what ? Had she no other name ? ' she asked at last, when she had mastered her emotion sufficiently to speak in her natural voice.

" ' Yes. Agatha Wynde,' Anna replied, and was instantly startled by a low, sharp cry from her companion, who laid her hand upon her side, exclaiming :

" ' It's my heart. I'm subject to it : but don't call any one ; let me sit here until I'm better. Anything like a fuss around me disturbs me so much.' "

" ' She was very white, and shivering like one with an ague chill, and though Anna did not call any one, she was glad to see her own maid, Celine, coming toward them. Eugenie did not object to her but suffered her to rub her

head and hands until she was better, and the violent beating of her heart had ceased.

"Now let me sit here in quiet, and do you tell me about this Agatha, whose ghost is said to haunt the chateau. Was she pretty, and when did she die?"

"This she said to Celine, who, always ready and glad to talk, began the story of Agatha so far as she knew it, telling of her arrival at the chateau one wild rainy night, of her deep melancholy and sweet, quiet ways, of her lapse into insanity, her pleadings to go home to Normandy, and of her subsequent death with the words upon her lips, '*Je vais revoir ma Normandie.*'"

"She was not like you madame," Celine said. "She was the people like me, and so she talked with me more than ladies might. There was no real marriage, only a sham, a fraud she said; but she was innocent, and I believe she told the truth; but *Mon Dieu*, what must such girls expect when gentlemen like monsieur entice them away from home:" and Celine shrugged her shoulders meaningly, as if to say that the poor dead girl beneath the grass had received only her due in betrayal and ruin.

"Yes, don't talk any more, please. The pain has come back, and I believe I'm dying," Eugenie gasped, while both Anna and Celine knelt by her, rubbing her again, and loosening her dress until the colour came back to her face and she declared herself able to return to the chateau. 'Don't talk of my illness and bring everybody around me,' she said to her attendants. 'I cannot bear people

when I'm so. Send me Elise, and leave me alone. She knows what to do.'

"They got her to her room, and called her maid, who said she had seen her thus a hundred times, and so Anna felt no particular alarm at the sudden illness, and did not think to connect it in any way with that lonely grave in the yard, or dream of the agony and remorse of the proud woman who lay upon her face writhing in pain and moaning bitterly:

"*'Ma Petite, oh, ma Petite.* I have found thee at last, sent to thy early grave' by me—by me. Alas, if I too could die and be buried there beside thee.'

"Eugenie did not appear at dinner that evening. She was suffering from a severe nervous attack, Elise said, and the attack kept her in her room for some three days, during which time she saw no one but her maid, who reported her to the servants as in a dreadful way, walking her room day and night, eating nothing, but wringing her hands continually and moaning:

"*'Oh, how can I bear it—how can I bear it, and live?'*

"Once Mr. Haverleigh attempted to see her, but she repulsed him angrily.

"*'No, no, tell him to go away. I cannot, and will not see him,'* she said; and her eyes glared savagely at the door outside which he was standing.

"After a few days, however, she grew more quiet, and asked for Anna, who went to her immediately, feeling shocked at the great change a few days had wrought in the brilliant woman whom so many accounted handsome.

True to her instincts as a Frenchwoman, she was becomingly dressed in an elegant morning wrapper, with a tasteful cap upon her glossy hair, but all her bright colour was gone; her eyes were sunken and glassy, and she looked pale, and withered, and old as she reclined in her easy-chair.

"Oh, madame, I did not know you had been so sick. I am very sorry," Anna said, going up to her, and offering her hand.

"But Eugenie would not take it, and motioning her away, said:

"It is not for you to touch such as I; but sit down, I want to talk much with you. There is something I must tell somebody, and you are the only true, pure woman here, unless it may be Madame Verwest, who hates me. I'd as soon talk to an icicle and expect sympathy, as to her. I liked you when I saw you, though I came prepared to hate, and do you harm."

"Hate me, and wished to do me harm? Why?" Anna asked, her great blue eyes full of wonder and surprise.

"Don't you know? Can't you guess some reason why I should hate you?" Eugenie said: and Anna, into whose mind a suspicion of what this woman really was had never entered, answered:

"I do not know why any one should hate me, when I am so desolate, and wretched, and homesick here, but not crazy. Oh madame, surely you do not believe me crazy?"

"Crazy! No, not half as much so as the man who keeps you here," and Eugenie spoke impetuously, while

her black eyes flashed, and there came a deep red flush to her face. 'What age are you, girl? You look too young to be madame,' she continued.

"'Not quite nineteen,' was Anna's reply.

"'Neither was *she* when I saw her last, and you are like her in voice and manner, and so many things, and that's why I cannot hate you. Oh, *Mon Dieu*, that she should die and I live on,' said Eugenie. 'Let me tell you about her, the sweetest child that ever drew breath; not high or noble, but lowly born, a country lass, as innocent and happy as the birds which sang by that cottage door, and I loved her, oh, how I loved her from the hour her dying mother, who was not my mother, but my father's wife, put her in my arms. I am almost thirty-eight. She, if living, would be twenty-three: so you see my arms were young and strong, and they kept her so tenderly and lovingly. How I cared for her and watched over her as she grew into the sweetest rose that ever bloomed in fair Normandy. How I toiled and drudged for her, going without myself that *Petite* might be fed, that hers might be the dainty food, the pretty peasant's dress in which she was so lovely. How I meant to educate and bring her up a lady, so that no soil should come to her soft white hands, nor tire to her little feet. When she was fifteen I went to Paris, hoping to get money and a home for her. I was a milliner first, then I recited, I sang, I acted and attracted much attention, and kept myself good and pure for her, till there came a chance of earning money faster, and woe is me. I took it. You are *Anglaise* or

Americaine, which amounts to the same thing. You do not understand how a woman may think herself respectable and do these things, but I am French, educated differently. Half of my country-women have their *grande passion*, their *liaison*, their, what do you call it in English ?

" 'I know, I understand,' Anna said, feeling an involuntary shrinking from the woman, who went on :

" 'I sent her money and such lovely dresses, and meant to leave my own bad life and make a home where she should come and keep herself unspotted ; but, alas ! the wolf entered the fold, and the news came startlingly, one day, that she had fled from Normandy with an Englishman, who promised her marriage, and she believed him, and left these lines for me :

" 'Darling sister, I go for good, not for bad. He will marry me in Paris, and he is so noble and kind ; but for a time it must be secret, his relatives are so grand, and will be angry at first.'

" 'Then I believe I went mad, and for weeks I scoured Paris in quest of her, but found her not, and I grew desperate, for I knew the world better than she did, and knew he would not marry her, and so the wretched months dragged on and grew into a year and a half, and then the white-haired father wrote me our darling was dead, where, or how, or when he did not know, only she was dead, with a blight on her name I was sure, and I think I was glad she was gone before she grew to be what I was. I folded away all the pretty dresses and trinkets

I had saved for her; I put them in a chest and turned the key, and called it *Petite's* grave, and made another grave in my heart, and buried there every womanly instinct and feeling, and stamped them down and said I did not care to what lengths I went now that *Petite* was gone. Then, I painted my face, and braided my hair, and put on all my diamonds, and went to the opera that very night, and was stared at and commented upon, and called the best dressed woman there, and I had a *petit souper* after at my home, and was admired and complimented by the men who partook of my hospitality, and whom I hated so bitterly because they were men, and through such as they *ma Petite* was in her grave.'

"'And did you never hear how she died, or where?' Anna asked, without a shadow of suspicion as to the truth.

"'Yes,' Eugenie replied. 'After years—three years, I believe, though they seemed a hundred to me—I heard that my darling was pure and white as the early snow which falls on the fields in the country. The wretch could not possess her without the marriage tie, and so entangled was he with another woman, who had great power over him, that he dared not make her his wife; and so there was a form, which would not stand and was no marriage at all, and when she found it out she went mad, and died with a song of home on her lips. Yes, went mad—mad, my darling. You know whom I mean.'

"She hissed out the two words, 'mad, mad,' and rocked to and fro in her anguish, while Anna, with a

face as white as the dead girl's in her grave, whispered back :

" ' You mean Agatha.' "

" ' Yes, I mean Agatha—Agatha—my pet, my pride, my idol. Agatha, lured, deceived, betrayed, ruined, murdered by the man on whom I, who would have given my heart's blood to save her, was even then wasting my blandishments, and doing all I could to keep him from a new love. Oh, Agatha, if you could but know the grief I am enduring for my sin. No Magdalen ever repented more bitterly than do I, but for me there is no voice bidding me sin no more, and I shall go on and on, deeper and deeper, till the horror of the pit overtakes me, and Agatha and I will never meet again—never, never.' "

" Oh, how Anna pitied the poor, repentant woman, writhing with pain and remorse, and how she loathed the man who stood revealed to her just as he never had before—the monster who had wrought such misery. And she shrank from Eugenie, too ; but pitied her as well, for there was much of the true woman left in her still, and Anna forced herself to lay her hands on the bowed head of the sorrowing woman, to whom the touch of those hands seemed to be life-giving and reassuring, for there was a storm of sobs, and tears, and fierce gesticulations, and then the impetuous and excitable Frenchwoman grew calm, and something of her old self was on her face as she shrugged her shoulders significantly, and said :

" ' Oh, *Mon Dieu* ! such a scene as I've made, and frightened you, child. How monsieur would have enjoyed that ;

he would call it my high art in acting. Curse him ! I'll act for him no more ; ' and the hard, bitter look of hatred came back to her face for an instant, then left it again as she said : ' I've told you my story, little one, who seems like Agatha. Now tell me yours ; where you met him ; why you married, and how you come here shut up, a prisoner. Maybe I can help you. Who knows ? I owe him something for his wrong to Agatha.'

" But for this hint that possibly Eugenie could help her, Anna might have shrank from confiding her story to her, but this new revelation of her husband's character had so increased her horror and dislike of him, that she readily seized upon anything which offered the shadow of a chance to escape from a life she hated ; and conquering all feelings of distrust and aversion for one who had openly confessed herself a bad woman, she began the story, and told first of her New England home, her poverty, and her life in the dingy shoe shop, with the sickening smell of leather and wax. At this point Eugenie started forward, exclaiming joyfully, and this time in broken English :

" ' Then you are not *no-bil-i-te*, You be very *people* as me. *J'en suis bien aise*. I hate *no-bil-i-te*, who will trample such as we. I am pleased you are much the people. I will help you more.'

" ' You mistake,' Anna cried, eagerly, ' I am *nobility*, as you call it. We are *all* nobility in America, or can be. We are all sovereigns by right. No matter what we do, we can rise.'

" Anna grew very warm with this flash of national and

personal pride, while Eugenie looked at her curiously, wondering, no doubt, how a born sovereign could work in wax and leather, but she was too good-natured and polite to dispute the point, and answered, laughingly:

“*Pardonnez moi, madame. Je me trompe. En Amerique vous—vous—what you call it? You all expect to marry kings and emperors, and be mi-lady some time—oui—oui—je l’aime beaucoup, but go on, I wait to hear how monsieur came—*”

“Then Anna told her of Haverleigh’s visit to Millfield; of his admiration for herself; of her desire for money and position; of her marriage in the church, which was a real marriage; of the foolish words spoken and overheard in New York; of Haverleigh’s jealousy and rage; of the punishment finally inflicted upon her, and of her husband’s different moods since, sometimes so loving as to fill her with disgust, and again revengeful and savage to a degree which made her dread him as a madman.

“‘Ah, *ma Petite*,’ Eugenie cried, ‘and he is a madman, at times—much mad; but, tell me, was there no other one whom *Petite* cared for at home, in that quiet, small town? No *grande passion* to make monsieur jealous?’

“So much had happened since the days when Anna walked home from church with Hal Morton, and sang to him in the twilight, that she had almost forgotten him, but thoughts of him came back to her now, and by the sudden heaving of her chest, and the flush which rose to her forehead, Eugenie guessed that there was some *grande passion*, as she named it, and very adroitly drew

from Anna that somebody was perhaps sadder for her marriage, 'though I never should have married him,' she said. 'We were both too poor, and Mr. Morton's family were the first in Boston.'

"*Mon Dieu. Quelle difference,*' Eugenie exclaimed, with a shrug. 'Are you not all born—what you call it in English—governors! *Non, pardonnez—sovereigns!* I do so have things mixed.'

"Anna laughed at the mistake, the first real, hearty laugh in which she had indulged since she came to Chateau d'Or, and said:

"Yes, but sometimes there's a difference in sovereigns, you know.'

"*Oh, ciel,* but it's to me very strange. I think I should like *votre république*, but go on. You never think to marry Monsieur Morton, but you like him much, and Monsieur Haverleigh find it out, and trust me, child, that broil—bake—fry; what you call it, rankle in his jealous brain, for however many passions he have, he want you to own but one. *Me comprenez vous? Bien! Je commence à comprendre l'affaire;* but I can help *la petite madame*, and I will. And *la mère*, does she never know where you stay all these time?'

"There was then a rain of tears as Anna told of her mother's death, and her sister's removal to some place in the far West, whose name she did not even know, and how, latterly, the sister had ceased to write at all, Mr. Haverleigh said.

"And they think I am in a mad-house, and that is the

worst of all. Oh, I wish I were dead like mother, for I've given up all hope of leaving Chateau d'Or, and when baby is born I hope I'll die,' Anna said, amid her tears.

"*Die! Jamais!* You shall go home—back to the little house, and the wax, and the leather, and the smell-bad, and the mother who is *not* dead. I not believe that, it is one part of the great whole; *la mère* not dead, and you shall see her yet. Give me the—the—what you say—*poste restante*—*l'adresse* of the little village, and I write *tout-de-suite*. Trust me, *ma petite enfant*. Trust Eugenie, for the sake of Agatha.'

"It seemed to Anna that when Eugenie attempted English she was softer and more womanly in her way of expressing herself; was very pretty and sweet, and Anna began to feel a degree of trust in and dependence upon her which astonished herself. Eugenie remained at the chateau a week longer, but never took any part in the gaieties which, without her suggestive and ruling spirit, were inexpressibly flat and stale. To Haverleigh she was cold and distant to a degree, which angered him sorely and made him cross, and irritable, and moody; but he was far from suspecting the cause of Eugenie's changed demeanour, and never dreamed of connecting it in any way with Agatha, or suspected the intimacy springing up between his wife and Eugenie.

"It was no part of Eugenie's plan that he should do so and though she saw Anna often in the privacy of her apartment, where she spent much of her time, she scarcely ever spoke to her in the presence of Haverleigh, except

to pass the compliments of the day, and when at last she left the chateau for good, there was a simple hand-shake and *au revoir* between herself and Anna, who, nevertheless, grew more cheerful and happy, but kept, even from Madame Verwest, the hope she had of a release, or at least of hearing once more from home. How this would be accomplished she did not know, but she trusted to Eugenie's ready wit and ingenuity in deceiving Haverleigh, who lingered at the chateau until November, and who grew so moody, and unreasonable, and tyrannical that, popular as he usually was with his servants, every one hailed his final departure with delight.

"When next Anna heard from him he told her of a dangerous and unaccountable illness which had come upon Eugenie the very day she reached Paris.

"'She did not go straight home,' he wrote but took a roundabout way through Normandy, where in some obscure place she spent a week with her father, who, it seems, died while she was there. His death or something upset her terribly, and she has suffered, and is still suffering, with a nervous fever which makes her perfectly dreadful at times—out of her head in fact—and she will not see one of her old friends. Even I, who have known her so long, am forbidden the house, her nurse telling me that she actually knows when I step on the stair and instantly grows fearfully excited. So, lest I make her worse, I only send now twice a day to inquire how she is. They say she talks a great deal of *La Petite* and

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Anna when delirious. That Anna is you, of course, but who is *Petite*? Do you know?’

“Anna thought she did, but did not deem it advisable to enlighten her husband, whose letter she only answered because of her anxiety to hear again from Eugenie. All her hopes for the future were centered upon that woman for whose recovery she prayed many times a day, wondering if any letter had yet gone across the water, and waiting so anxiously for the response it was sure to bring.





CHAPTER VIII.

MORE NEWS WHICH CAME TO MILLFIELD.

"IT was generally known all over Millfield that poor Anna Strong was a lunatic. 'Hopelessly insane,' was the last message from the disconsolate husband, who wrote regularly and affectionately to the sorrowing family, which still occupied the small red house by the mill-pond; for Mrs. Strong was not dead, though her brown hair had all turned gray, and her face wore continually a look of sorrow and anxiety. Grief and concern for Anna weighed heavily upon her, and she could not rid herself of a presentiment that there was something behind—something which had never been told her. Haverleigh's letters were exceedingly kind, and often contained money-orders for the family, who were far better off in worldly goods than when he first came to Millfield. Fred. was ready for the Sophomore class in college; Mrs. Strong's sign of 'Dressmaking' was taken down, and Mary only taught a select class of young ladies who came to her to recite.

"In a pecuniary and social point of view the Strongs had been gainers by Anna's marriage; but they missed

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her terribly, and mourned for her as for one worse even than dead. Very eagerly they watched for Mr. Haverleigh's letters, which at first were frequent and regular. Latterly, however, they had grown less frequent, and it was now some time since Mrs. Strong had heard from him, and she was beginning to get impatient and anxious, when one day, the last of February, there came to her two letters bearing the foreign post-mark. Both were from Paris, and one in Mr. Haverleigh's well-known handwriting. This was opened first, and said that Anna was better, and had recognised and talked with her husband the last time he saw her, and was beginning to manifest some little interest in what was passing around her.

" 'Thank heaven for that,' was Mrs. Strong's fervent ejaculation, as she folded the short letter and turned to Fred, who was studying the superscription of the other envelope, which he had not noticed particularly before.

" 'It was in his mother's box, and had been handed to him with Haverleigh's, which, as the more important, had received the first attention.

" 'What does this mean, and who can it be from?' he said, reading aloud the novel direction, which was written in that small peculiar hand common to the French.

" 'To the friends of Madame Ernest Haverleigh, *nee* Mademoiselle Anna Strong, Millfield, Wooster County, Massachusetts, United States of Amerique, in New England. P. S. If the friends may be gone, forward where they may be.'

" 'So much writing covered nearly the entire side of the

envelope, which looked soiled and worn, as if it had been long upon the road, which in fact was the case.

"After leaving Chateau d'Or, Eugenie had gone to her father to whom she confessed the whole shameful story of her life, and told what she knew of poor Agatha's fate. Such news was too much for the old man, who the day following was stricken with paralysis and died. Doubly and trebly steeped in remorse, and accusing herself as the murderer of both father and sister, Eugenie returned to Paris, and before she could collect her senses sufficiently to write to Anna's friends, she sank into that nervous, half delirious state of mind in which she continued until January was nearly gone, when she began to rally. But her improvement was so slow, and she was so weak, that it was some time before she had power to write, as she had promised, to the friends in Millfield. This was quite a task for her, as she could write English very indifferently, and mixed it up with a good deal of French. But she accomplished it at last, and managed pretty accurately and fully, to tell what she had heard from Anna, to propose a plan of action, in which she was to be one of the principals.

"It would be impossible to describe the surprise and consternation, amounting almost to incredulity, with which Mrs. Strong listened to this letter which Mary contrived to read with the help of the dictionary and Fred., who knew a little French. At first it did not seem to her possible that any man could be so deliberately cruel and treacherous, but the facts were there, and when she re-

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called many things which had appeared strange in Mr. Haverleigh's letters, she could not doubt the truth of what Eugenie had written. Fred. did not doubt it for a moment. He had always distrusted Haverleigh; always thought it strange that notwithstanding the many times they had asked where Anna was, they had never received a reply. They knew now where she was; but for a few moments sat staring blankly at each other, too much benumbed and bewildered to speak. Fred. was the first to rally, and with quivering lip and clinched fist exclaimed:

"'If he was here I'd kill him.'

"That broke the spell at once; the tongues were loosened, and they talked long and earnestly together of the best course to be pursued, and decided finally to follow Eugenie's directions. But in order to do this it was necessary to write to her first, and this Fred. did that very day, sending his letter by the next mail which left Millfield, and then, during the interval of waiting, devoted himself assiduously to acquiring a speaking knowledge of the French language. Fortunately there was in Millfield a native teacher, and to him Fred. went for instruction, studying night and day, and working so industriously that by the time Eugenie's second letter was received, and he was ready to start on his journey, he felt certain of at least making himself understood in whatever part of France he might be.

"Both Mrs. Strong and her daughters thought it better to say nothing of Eugenie's letters and the information

they contained for the present, but rather to wait for the result of Fred.'s adventure. Consequently, all the people knew was that Fred. was going to see his sister, and it was generally supposed that Mr. Haverleigh had forwarded the money for the voyage, and his kindness and generosity to his wife's family was the subject of much comment and praise. Little did the people of Millfield dream of the truth, or suspect that when at last the *Oceanic* sailed down the harbour of New York with Fred. Strong on board, he was there with the steerage passengers and under the name of Charles Patterson. He was not able to take a first-class passage, and he was afraid to bear his own name lest by some chance it should reach the eye of Mr. Haverleigh, who would thus be put on the alert. So he bore cheerfully all the annoyances and discomforts of a steerage passage, kept himself very quiet, and mostly aloof from all his companions but one, a Swiss lad who spoke French, and who willingly taught and talked with the young American so anxious to learn.



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CHAPTER IX.

EUGENIE'S WAITING MAID.

“CHARLES PATTERSON, London,’ was the name of the occupant of No. 512, Hotel du Louvre, Paris, and 512 was a small bedroom on the fifth floor, and looked down upon the busy Rue St. Honoré. Charles was a very fair, girlish-looking boy, who, from the night he took possession of No. 512, kept his room entirely, and was served in his apartment daily with ‘*café au lait*’ and two eggs in the morning, and with ‘*bistek aux pommes*’ and *haricots verts* for dinner in the afternoon. At first the waiter had pointed significantly to the printed notice that having his meals thus served would cost an extra franc, but Charles had answered promptly, ‘*Je le sais*,’ and that had ended it, and he was free to eat where he liked. Nobody noticed or thought of him again until the close of the second day, when, as he stood looking down upon the street below, and reading the strange names on the signs, there came a knock at the door, and a servant handed in a card bearing the name of ‘Eugenie Arschinard.’ The lady herself was in the hall near the

door, and in a moment was in the room alone with the young boy, whom she addressed as 'Monsieur Charles,' and whom she regarded intently as he brought her a chair, and then proceeded to light the one candle which the room possessed.

"*'Mon Dieu !'* she began, in her pretty, half-French, half-English style ; '*vous êtes un petit garçon ! Mais n'importe. You make a very joli—what you call him ? —waiting-maid pour moi. Ah ! but you very like votre sœur. Poor leetle madame !'*

"*'Oh, tell me of Anna, please ! Tell me all you know, and what I am to do,'* Fred. said, speaking in a whisper, as she had done, lest the occupants of the adjoining rooms should hear what it was necessary should be kept secret.

"*'Madame has a leetle babee,'* Eugenie said, and as Fred. uttered an exclamation of surprise, she continued : *'It is so, veritable, but I it not write, for fear to worry la mère. Both doing well, petite mother and babee, which makes a boy, and monsieur is—what you call it ?—very much up ; oui, very much ; but I hasten. Monsieur comes to find me to-night à diner. I tell you all tout-de-suite.'*

"Then very rapidly she communicated her plan for future action, interspreeding her talk frequently with '*Mon Dieu ! you make so pretty girl Anglaise, with that fair hair and those blue eyes. Nobody can suspect.'*

"And Fred. followed her closely, and understood what he was to do, and, after she was gone, wrote to his mother a full account of his adventures thus far, and then waited

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"As will have been inferred, Eugenie was better. The nervous depression and weakness had passed away, and, stimulated with this new excitement, she had never looked handsomer than when she consented at last to receive Haverleigh as a guest at her house. He had not seen her for weeks, or rather months; for since the time she left Chateau d'Or, until the day she visited Fred. at the Louvre, he had not so much as heard the sound of her voice, and this long separation from her, and seeming indifference on her part, had revived his old passion for her ten-fold, and when at last she wrote, 'Come and dine with me this evening,' he felt as elated and delighted as the bashful lover who goes for his first visit to his fiancée.

"He found her waiting for him, dressed with elegant simplicity, and looking so fresh and young that he went forward eagerly to meet her, with his usual gush of tenderness, but she stepped backward from him, with something in her manner which kept him in check so that he only raised her hand to his lips, and then stood looking at her and marvelling at her changed demeanour. And yet in most points she was not changed; she would not suffer him to touch her, and she compelled him to treat her with a respect he had not been accustomed to pay her in private; but otherwise she was the same brilliant, fas-

inating woman, bewildering him with her beauty and intoxicating him with her wit and sharp repartees.

"For *la petite madame* and *le petit garçon* she made many enquiries, expressing a strong desire to see them, and telling him as soon as the weather was more favourable she meant to go down to Chateau d'Or for a little visit. To this Haverleigh assented, for he was perfectly willing that Eugenie and Anna should be on terms of intimacy, especially as the former pretended to believe in the lunacy of the latter, and inquired now very anxiously how she was in her mind since the birth of her child.

" 'A little better,' Haverleigh hoped, and Eugenie continued :

" 'I mean some time this summer, say in June, to have her here at my house for a little ; the change will do her great good. You are willing, of course, when it will please me so much.'

"The eyes which looked at him were very soft and pleading, and Haverleigh could not resist them, and answered that Madame Anna should certainly come up to Paris ; that he should be glad to have her come, especially as Madame Arschinard was so kind as to ask her. Then Eugenie grew more gracious and captivating, and told him of her strange sickness, which made her so nervous that she could not see her dearest friends, but she was so much better now, and glad to have monsieur to dine just as he used to do ; then she told him as a great misfortune that Elise, her waiting-maid had left her, and

that she had made up her mind to advertise for an English girl to fill her place. She was *so* tired with the trickery of her own countrywomen that she wanted to try some other nation; did monsieur think an English girl would suit her? Haverleigh did not know, but advised her to try, and then the conversation drifted into other channels until the elegant little dinner was served.

"After dinner they drove to the opera, where Eugenie's face was welcomed back again by a score or more of lorgettes levelled at her as she sat smilingly unconscious of the attention she was attracting, and with her mind far more occupied with the boy sleeping quietly in No. 512 than with the gay scene around her.

"The next morning there appeared in the French journals an advertisement for a young English maid, who could speak a little French, and before night Eugenie had been interviewed by at least a dozen girls, of all ages and sizes wanting the place, but none of them quite suited. She would wait a little longer, she said, hoping to get just what she desired. The next day, at a very unfashionable hour, she drove to the picture gallery at the Louvre, and bidding her coachman leave her there, stationed herself in one of the halls of statuary, which she knew to be less frequented than others, especially at that hour of the morning. And there she waited anxiously, now glancing through the open door as a new comer entered, and again pretending to be very busy with some broken-nosed or armless block of marble.

"Meanwhile Charles Patterson had settled his bill at

the Louvre, and with his travelling-bag, the only one piece of luggage brought from home, he passed from the court into the Rue de Rivoli, and crossing the street walked rapidly to the gallery of the Louvre; where madame was waiting for him. There were a few words spoken between them, and then both walked across the grounds to the street which skirts the river, where Eugenie called a carriage, and bade the coachman drive to a second-rate furnishing house in an obscure part of the city, with which she had been more familiar than she was now. It was a tolerably large establishment and supplied her with what she wanted, an entire outfit of a good substantial kind for a young English girl serving in the capacity of waiting-maid. There were several bundles, but Fred's bag held them all, except the round straw hat which Eugenie carried herself, closely wrapped in paper.

"'Drive us to the station St. Lazare,' she said to the coachman, and in the course of half an hour Fred. found himself alone with his companion in a first-class carriage, speeding along toward Versailles.

"Eugenie had spoken to the conductor, and thus secured the carriage to herself and Fred. so that there was no one to see them when they opened the bag, and brought out one by one the different articles which were to transform the boy Frederic Strong into the girl *Fanny Shader*, who was to be Eugenie's waiting-maid. For that was the plan, and with a little shrug of her shoulders and a significant laugh Eugenie said:

"'Now I go to sleep—very much asleep—while you

make the grand toilet;’ and closing her eyes she leaned back in her seat, and to all human appearance slept soundly, while Fred arrayed himself in his feminine habiliments, which fitted him admirably and became him remarkably well. Fair-haired, pale-faced, blue-eyed and small, he had frequently taken the part of a girl in the little plays his school companions were always getting up in Millfield, so he was neither strange nor awkward in his new dress and character, but assumed both easily and naturally as if they had belonged to him all his life, and when at last he said :

“ ‘I am ready ; you can wake up now,’ and Eugenie opened her eyes ; she started in astonishment and wonder, for instead of the delicate boy who had been her companion, there sat a good-sized girl, in a neatly-fitted brown stuff dress and sacque, with bands of white linen at the throat and wrists, and a dark straw hat perched jauntily upon her hair parted in the middle and curling naturally. The disguise was perfect, and Eugenie exclaimed delightedly :

“ ‘Oh, *Mon Dieu, c’est un grand succes.* You make such *jolie* girl. Nobody suspect ever. Now you must be *bien attentive* to me. You carry my shawl ; you pick up my *mouchoir*, so ;’ and she dropped her handkerchief to see how adroitly the new maid would stoop and hand it to her. It was well done, and Eugenie continued :

“ ‘You act perfect—perfectly. Now you not forget, but walk behind me always with the parcels, and not talk much with the other *domestiques*. *Ah, ciel*, but you

cannot, you cannot speak much French to them, and that be good ; but to me you speak French *toujours* : you learn it, which must be better by and by when the great trial comes.'

" They were now near to Versailles, and, when the long train stopped, Eugenie and her maid stepped out unobserved by any one ; and as there was an interval of two hours or more before they could return to Paris, Eugenie spent it in showing her companion the beauties of the old Palace and its charming grounds. And *Fanny* was very attentive and very respectful to her mistress, and acted the rôle of waiting-maid to perfection, though occasionally there was a gleam of mischief in the blue eyes, and a comical smile lurking about the corners of the mouth, as Fred. answered to the new name, or held up his skirts as they walked over a wet piece of ground.

" '*Mon Dieu*, but your feet are much larger for the rest of you,' Eugenie said, as she caught sight of his boots 'You must not show them so much.'

" So Fred. kept his dress down, and wondered how girls managed to walk so well with a lot of petticoats dangling around their ankles, but behaved himself on the whole with perfect propriety, and by the time Eugenie's residence in Paris was reached, had completely won his mistress's heart. It was past the luncheon hour, but Eugenie had chocolate and rolls in her room, and Fanny served her with the utmost deference, and moved so quietly and gently among her fellow servants that she came into favour at once, and *la jeune Anglaise* was toasted at dinner

by one of the footmen, who thought the new girl did not understand a word he said.

"It was two days before Haverleigh came to stop any length of time, and then he came to dine, and by appointment.

" 'I shall ring for you to do something for me after dinner, and you will be much careful,' Eugenie said to Fred, who had never been so nervous and excited as he was in view of the approaching ordeal.

"The stuff dress had been exchanged for a pretty calico, and the white fluted apron which he wore had been bought at the *Bon Marché*. The light, abundant hair was covered with a bit of muslin called a cap, with smart blue ribbons streaming behind, and this, more than anything else, made Fred into a girl—a tidy-looking maid, who stood with beating heart in the upper hall, listening to the tones of Haverleigh's voice, as they came from the salon below. How well Fred remembered that voice, and how his young blood boiled as he longed to rush upon the man, and with all his feeble strength avenge his sister's wrongs. But he must bide his time, and he waited till his mistress's bell should summon him to her presence, and that of his detestable brother-in-law.

"Haverleigh was in excellent spirits that night. Indeed he had been in excellent spirits ever since the morning when he received the dispatch from Chateau d'Or announcing the birth of a son. Whether it would ever please him to have his wife fully restored to reason and free to come and go with him in his journeying was

doubtful. It was a rather pleasant excitement, having her at the chateau, where he could visit her when the mood was on him ; but to have her with him in Paris, and Nice, and London, where he wished to be free and untrammelled, was another thing.

"So Anna seemed likely to remain just where she was for an indefinite length of time, unless he allowed her as a great favour to visit Eugenie for a few weeks. But the son—his boy—was to be a great source of pride and happiness to him, and he had already formed many plans for the future of that son, and everything wore a brighter hue since that little life began at Chateau d'Or. Then too, Eugenie was latterly more gracious in her demeanour toward him, and he had hopes that in time he might be reinstated in her good graces, and as he had a genuine liking for her, this of itself was a sufficient reason why he seemed so elated and even hilarious as he sat once more at her table and basked in the sunshine of her smile. To be sure she talked of Madame Haverleigh more than he cared to have her, but then she had conceived a great friendship for his wife, and it was for his interest to encourage it. So he, too, talked of Madame and her health, and answered Eugenie's questions regarding her family *en Amerique*. Was there insanity in the blood ? Was it a large family ? many sisters ? any brothers ? and were they *nobilité* ?

"At this question Haverleigh winced, for he was not certain how much nobility Eugenie would think there was in a shoe-shop ; but he tried to answer her readily, and

said the family was highly respectable, not nobility exactly, but good ; that *la mère* was dead—and here he did not look straight at Eugenie lest the lie should show itself—that there was a sister Mary, a stronger girl every way than Madame Anna, though not so pretty, and a boy Fred., who was, or seemed to be, quite young, and of whom he did not remember much ; he was more interested in girls, he said, and seldom took much notice of boys.

“Eugenie shrugged her shoulders significantly, and as they had finished their dessert led the way to the drawing-room, telling him as she went that her advertising had been very successful, and brought her such a treasure of an English girl, Fanny Shader, who was so nice and respectable. Haverleigh cared nothing for Fanny Shader personally, but if she interested Eugenie he must be interested too, and he said he was very glad Madame was suited, and asked from what part of England Fanny came. London was a safe place to come from, and so Fanny's home was there, and Eugenie said so, and fluttered about the salon until she remembered that she needed a shawl, and rang the bell for Fanny.

“Haverleigh was standing with his back to the fire, looking straight at the door, when Fanny came in, a flush on her cheek, but with a very modest expression in her blue eyes, which never glanced at Haverleigh but once. But in that glance they saw him perfectly from his head to his feet, and knew him for the same haughty Englishman who had so ignored Anna's family in Millfield. Hating Haverleigh as he did, it was impossible for Fred.

not to show something of it, and there was a sudden gleam, a kindling, in the eyes, which attracted Haverleigh's notice, and made him look more curiously after the supposed girl than he would otherwise have done. But there was not a shadow of suspicion in his mind as to the personality of the stranger, and when she was gone for the shawl he said, carelessly :

"And so that is the treasure? Nice, tidy-looking girl enough, but I should say she had a temper, judging from her eyes; looks a little like somebody I have seen."

"Fanny had returned with the shawl by this time, and so the conversation regarding her ceased, and Haverleigh thought and said no more of her, although she appeared several times during the evening in answer to her mistress, who wanted an unusual amount of waiting upon, it seemed to Haverleigh.

"She is certainly growing very nervous and fidgety, and I don't much envy that new girl her post as my lady's maid," he said to himself, and that was about all the thought he gave to Fanny Shader, whom for several days he saw every time he called upon Eugenie.





CHAPTER X.

EUGENIE GOES AGAIN TO CHATEAU D'OR.

"IT was some time during the latter part of January that the new life came to Chateau d'Or, and Madame Verwest telegraphed to Haverleigh, 'You have a son.' It was a big, healthy-looking boy, with great blue eyes, and soft curly hair like Anna's, but otherwise it was like its father, 'all Haverleigh,' Madame Verwest said, as she hugged the little creature to her, and amid a rain of tears, whispered something over it which Anna could not understand. Was it a blessing, or a prayer that this newborn child might be kept from the path trodden by another child which once had lain on her bosom, as soft and helpless as this, with the Haverleigh look on its face. Nobody could tell what she thought or felt, but from the moment the first infant wail echoed through the dreary house, Madame Verwest took the little one into her love and heart, and seemed to care for it far more, even, than the mother herself, for at first Anna shrank from the child so like its father, and felt better when it was not in her sight. But with returning health and strength there

came a change; the mother-love had asserted itself, and Anna was much happier than she had been before the little life came to claim her care. But for her husband there was no tenderness, no love—only a growing disgust and antipathy to him, and an increased dread of his visits, which were more frequent than formerly. He was very proud of his boy—Arthur he called him—though there had been no formal christening, because there was in the neighbourhood no Protestant priest. But Haverleigh meant to bring one down with him from Paris and have a grand christening party, and when Eugenie proposed visiting the chateau, he decided to have it while she was there, and to persuade her to stand as god-mother. So a box of elegant dresses, both for Anna and the child, was forwarded to the chateau, with the intelligence that Madame Arschinard would follow in a few days, together with a Protestant clergyman, who was travelling for his health, and whose acquaintance Haverleigh had accidentally made at a hotel. The prospect of seeing Eugenie again, and hearing from her whether she had ever written to America, and with what result, was a delightful one to Anna, who had never been so lovely even in her girlish days as she was that afternoon in early April, when, with her baby in her arms, she stood waiting the arrival of the train which was to bring the expected party from Paris. She had never heard of Fanny Shader, and naturally supposed that Elise would accompany Eugenie, as she did before.

“The train was late, half an hour behind time, and when

it came, and the carriage returned from the station, to Anna's inexpressible relief her husband was not in it. A sprained ankle, which was so very painful that he could not put his foot to the floor, would detain him in Paris for a few days, Eugenie explained, as she warmly greeted Madame Haverleigh, and stooped to kiss the baby in her arms. Then, turning to her maid, she said, in English :

" ' Here, Fannee, take my shawl and hat up to my room. Somebody shall show you the way, while I sit here a little minute in this pretty court.' "

" It was the first time Anna had noticed the new maid, who had stood partly hidden by Eugenie, gazing at her with flushed cheeks and bated breath, and trying so hard to keep from rushing upon her and crying out ' Oh, Anna, sister, I am Fred. Don't you know me ?' "

" She did not know or dream that the tall, slight girl in the gingham dress, with white apron and straw hat, was other than a waiting-maid, English, probably, as Eugenie addressed her in that language ; and she felt glad of the change, for Celine, her own maid, had not agreed very well with Elise on the occasion of her last visit at the chateau. It was Celine who conducted the new girl to Eugenie's rooms, and tried to be gracious by using the little English she had learned from Anna.

" ' How you call yourself ?' she asked. '*Fannee, votre nom ? c'est bien joli. Are you Anglaise ou Americaine ?*' "

" There was a moment's hesitancy, and then Fred. answered :

" '*Je suis Anglaise.*' "

"Whereupon Celine, delighted that she could speak a word of French, and taking it for granted she could speak more, rattled on so vehemently that her companion stood aghast, comprehending nothing except that Celine had thought her *Americaine*, because she was tall and thin, and not—not '*comment appelez-vous cela*,' she said: 'very much grown, much stomach and chin, *comme Anglais*.'

" '*Anglais* thin *quelquefois*,' Fanny said: and then the mischievous Celine commented upon his hands and feet, which her quick eyes had noted as large and unfeminine, albeit the hands were very white and shapely.

"Colouring to the roots of his hair, Fred. stood the ordeal as well as he could, feeling almost as if he were in the presence of a detective, and should have his real name, and sex, and business screamed to all the world. But Celine was far from suspecting the truth, and rather liked *la femme Anglaise* on the whole, and while the ladies talked together in the court below, took her over the house and showed her the view from the windows, and presented her to any of the servants whom they chanced to meet as *Fannee*, who was *Anglaise*, and came from *Londres*.

"Meanwhile Eugenie and Anna sat talking on different subjects, while all the time the latter was longing to ask the all-important question as to whether there was any news from America. At last she could endure the suspense no longer, and grasping Eugenie's hand, said, in a whisper:

" 'Tell me, have you written? Do they know? I have waited so long for some message.'

" 'Yes I have wrote; and they do know, and *la mère n'est pas morte*, as I tell you, but lives in Millfield the same. More I tell you *plus tard*,' was Eugenie's reply.

"And the next moment Anna had fainted.

"The shock was too great for her, and with a little gasping cry, which sounded like 'mother,' she fell across Eugenie's lap, where she lay unconscious, while the excitable Frenchwoman screamed lustily for help. Celine and Fred. had just come out upon the open gallery which ran entirely round the court and connected with the the sleeping rooms on the third floor.

"Both heard the cry, and both started for the rescue; but *la femme Anglaise* outstripped Celine, and taking Anna in her arms as if she had been a child, exclaimed:

" 'Where is her room? Let me take her to it.'

" '*Oui, oui*, I show you,' Celine replied, as she led the way to her mistress's room, ejaculating '*Mon Dieu!* what strength slim people must have to carry Madame so.'

"Oh, how tenderly Fred. held his unconscious sister, never thinking of her weight, thinking only that he had her in his arms, and could press his boyish lips against hers, and hug her to his bosom. Very gently he laid her upon the bed, and then stood back while restoratives were applied, until she opened her eyes and showed signs of returning consciousness.

" 'She hold *l'enfant* too long in her weak state, and just fainted sudden,' Eugenie explained to Madame Ver-

west, who cared for Anna until she seemed wholly herself and declared that she was as well as ever, but would like to be rather quiet, with no one to do with her but Madame Arschinard.

" 'She never tires me,' she said.

" And so the two had tea together in Anna's room, and were waited upon by Celine, so there was no chance for further conversation until the next morning after the late breakfast, when Eugenie invited Anna to her room, where the *soi-disant* Fanny was busy arranging her mistress's wardrobe in the closet and drawers.

" At her Anna did not even glance, but she knew she was in the room, and felt anxious for her to leave, as the presence of a third party would necessarily prevent her from questioning Eugenie with regard to Millfield. But Fanny was apparently in no hurry to leave, and it seemed to Anna that she was purposely dawdling and taking a long time to accomplish a little.

" Anna was occupying the seat which Eugenie offered her, near the window, and directly facing Fanny, whose movements could all be seen if one chose to watch her; and despairing of her quitting the apartment, Anna began at last to watch her as she moved from box to closet or shelf, sometimes with her face turned full toward the window where Anna sat, and sometimes with her back that way. At last, as Anna made no sign of recognition, Eugenie said:

" 'Fanny, have you found that box of bon-bops?'

" 'Yes, Madame, I have found it,' was the reply, spoken

in Fred's own natural voice, which sent a thrill through Anna's veins, and made her heart beat rapidly as she thought of home and Fred., whose voice Fanny's was so like; and Fanny was like him, too—the same walk, the same motion of the hands, the same turn of the head. Surely, surely, she had seen it all before, and involuntarily grasping Eugenie's arm, she whispered in a tone of affright:

“Who is she—that girl you call Fanny?”

“That girl” heard the question, and turning square round toward Anna, tore off the cap from her head, and, running her fingers through her curly hair, gave to it the old, natural look, and then stood confronting the startled woman, whose face was white as marble, and whose lips tried in vain to articulate the one word: ‘Fred.’

“He had her in his arms the next moment, kissing her passionately, and saying to her:

“‘It’s I, Anna; truly Fred., and no ghost. I’ve come to get you away, to take you home to mother, who is not dead. Sweet sister, how much you must have suffered; but it is all over now. Madame and I will save you from that dreadful man.’

“Then Anna’s tears began to flow, and she sobbed passionately, while Fred. tried to comfort and reassure her by talking of Millfield and home as of things just within her reach.

“‘Before all the summer flowers are gone we will be there,’ he said; ‘but you must be very discreet, and no one here must ever know that I am not Fanny Shader. Don’t

I make a nice maid? Only Celine thinks my feet and hands too big,' he said, as he adjusted his jaunty cap again, and walked across the floor with a swinging motion to his skirts which set Anna to laughing hysterically, and so saved her from another fainting fit.

"Eugenie put away her own dresses and finery after that, and left the brother and sister free to talk together of all that had transpired since Anna left home with the man who seemed to her more and more a demon, as she learned all he had written of her to her friends.

"'He must have been mad himself,' she said, 'as I can see no motive for his pursuing his petty revenge so long and to such extremes.'

"And then together they talked of her escape, which Fred. had come to accomplish, or rather to assist in, for Eugenie was the one who was to plan and devise, and both agreed to trust her implicitly.

"After a long consultation it was decided that Madame Verwest should be taken into confidence and be told at once who Fanny Shader was, and after that matters were to rest for awhile and Eugenie to remain at the Chateau d'Or until the last of May or the first of June, during which time Fred. was to devote himself to the baby and become so necessary to its well-being that to leave him at the chateau as nurse would be comparatively easy of accomplishment, after which the *denouement* was to follow naturally.

* * * * *

"Mr. Haverleigh's sprain proved more serious than he had at first anticipated, and it was nearly two weeks before he was able to come down to the chateau. Then he arrived unannounced one afternoon, and was accompanied by a young English clergyman, a rollicking, easy-going man, who was out on what he called a *lark*, and who enjoyed nothing better than the trip to Chateau d'Or, with Haverleigh, for whom he had conceived a great liking. The christening was uppermost in Haverleigh's mind. His boy, his son and heir, must have a name, and the second evening after his arrival the ceremony took place, and the baby was baptized *Arthur Strong*, Eugenie standing as god-mother, and Fanny Shader holding the child. Fanny had proved invaluable, and entirely superseded the fine lady from Avignon, who had come to the chateau when the child was born, and when Haverleigh arrived there was a plan on foot for keeping the girl entirely as baby's nurse. This plan was made to appear wholly Eugenie's, who felt it a duty to part with her treasure for the good of her little god-child. In this matter Haverleigh was not particular, and greatly to the satisfaction of all parties Fanny became little Arthur's nurse, and was thus almost constantly in Anna's society. Once or twice Haverleigh had looked curiously and closely at the new girl as if there was something familiar in the features, but Fred. always seemed to know when he was an object of inspection, and managed adroitly to get out of sight without appearing to do so. He never spoke to his master except to answer a

question, and then his manner was exceedingly deferential and quite gratifying to the man, who liked nothing better than a cringing manner in a servant, as if he were lord and master of all.

"Those spring days at Chateau d'Or were very pleasant ones, for Anna was buoyed up with the hope of escape from the man who grew each day more and more detestable and terrible to her. His evident admiration for Eugenie, which he did not try to conceal, would alone have made her hate him had there been no other cause. But Eugenie's infatuation for him was ended, and though she had no fear or dread of him in her heart, like Anna, she had no liking for him, and only feigned to tolerate him until she had achieved her revenge, for with her it was nothing more than that. She was not a woman of good or firm principles of any kind, and with the right or wrong she did not trouble herself, but she had loved her young sister with an all-absorbing love, and if she could do aught to harm the man who had wrought her sister's ruin she was resolved to do it; so she lingered at the chateau and professed herself so much in love with Anna and the child that she could not endure the thought of a separation from them, and only decided at the last to return to Paris on condition that Anna should be allowed to visit her sometime in June or July. And to this Haverleigh consented, and said he would himself come down from Paris for her when she was ready for the journey. But this was no part of Eugenie's plan. When Anna left

Chateau d'Or she must leave it without other escort than her brother, and of her ability to manage this she constantly reassured Anna, who grew so excited and anxious that she sank into a kind of nervous fever, which confined her to her room when Eugenie at last said good-bye, and started for Paris with Haverleigh.





CHAPTER XI.

THE ESCAPE.

"A LETTER had been received at the chateau to the effect that Anna was to be ready to go to Paris the following week, with her baby and nurse, and that her husband would come down to accompany her. It would be impossible to describe Anna's state of mind at the receipt of this letter, while Madame Verwest, who had been taken fully into her confidence, seemed for a time as bewildered and nervous as Anna herself. Then she rallied, and astonished Anna and Fred. by declaring her intention to go with them.

"'What, go to America?' Anna asked; and then Madame replied:

"'Yes, to America. I have long wished to see it, and cannot be separated from the baby. I will go with you;' and from this decision she never wavered, but went calmly on with her few preparations, while Anna waited anxiously for the telegram which Eugenie had promised to send her, and which came the day after the receipt of Haverleigh's letter, and was as follows:

“You are to come at once, instead of waiting till next week, and monsieur will meet you at Avignon.

‘EUGENIE.’

“As this was directed to the care of Brunell, who knew of the proposed visit, it was considered all right by that functionary, and by him passed to Anna, who trembled so violently that she could scarcely read the message, which was exactly what Eugenie said it should be, and early to-morrow she was going away from what had really been a prison so long, notwithstanding that in some respects it had been a pleasant home. But she had no regrets in leaving it, for every spot was so closely connected with the man whose name she bore, and from whom she was fleeing, that she loathed it utterly, just as she loathed the elegant dresses with which her closets were filled, and not one of which she took with her. She packed her jewels, however; her diamonds, and pearls, and topazes, for she might need the money they would bring. To Celine, who had expected to go as maid, she had said that she did not need her, and had quieted her with a set of coral and a handsome evening dress.

“And now the morning had actually dawned, and nothing happened to prevent our travellers from passing out from Chateau d’Or to the carriage, which conveyed them to the station in time for the early train from Marseilles; but Anna was so weak that she was lifted bodily into the railway carriage, and continued in a half-unconscious state for nearly an hour, while she was whirled rapidly

away from the scene of so much misery. Avignon was reached at last, and Eugenie's face was the first to greet them as they passed from the station, and then Anna fainted quite away, for now it seemed sure that freedom and America were just within her grasp.

'Is it sure, and where is he?' Anna asked, when she could speak at all, and Eugenie replied in her broken English, interspersed with French:

'*Où est-il? à Paris, mais, mon Dieu,* such time I have had. I get him to write for you to come next week, late some day in the week, and then I telegraph myself for you to start to-day, and last night he dine with me, and I tell him I must go to Normandy for one, two or three days. I don't know sure, and so I cheat him and come here to meet you with Madame Verwest. *Ciel*, why is she here?'

'I go with Madame Haverleigh to America,' was Madame Verwest's reply; whereupon Eugenie exclaimed:

'*Vous allez en Amerique! c'est impossible! Où est l'argent? Nous n'en avons pas assez pour vous.*'

'But I have more than enough to pay my passage, and I am going,' Madame said, so firmly and decidedly that Eugenie merely shrugged her shoulders, and replied:

'*Eh bien*, I fear bad.'

'You need not, you need not, for she is the truest friend; she would never betray us,' Anna cried.

'And if she did?' Eugenie replied, with a threatening gleam in her flashing eyes which meant much, but did not

intimidate Madame Verwest, who knew her own business and interests better than any one else.

"It was dark when they took the train again, and this time their destination was Havre, and when at last that port was reached, their party consisted of Anna, her baby, Madame Verwest, Eugenie, and the boy Fred., who had on the road been metamorphosed into himself and his own clothes again, and stepped from the car a very assured youth, equal to any emergency which might present itself.

"Fortunately for the travellers, a ship was to sail for New York the following morning, and there was one vacant state-room, which was immediately secured for Anna and Madame Verwest, while Fred went as second-class. Eugenie saw them on board and bade them adieu with tears raining down her cheeks, and when Anna kissed her again and again, and said :

" 'I never can thank you enough, or understand why you have been so kind to me,' she answered, sobbingly :

" 'Not for you, *petite madame*. Not for you, *seule*. Do not think me good as that. I learn to like you much ; *c'est vrai*, but not care particularly to run much risk. It is for her, *ma petite, ma sœur*, for Agatha, for revenge. He lose me my sister, I lose him his boy, and he will feel it. Oh, he will suffer and I shall think of Agatha, and be glad, much glad at first, and then who knows, I may comfort him, for what matter now for me. I bad anyway.'

" 'Oh, Madame,' Anna cried, 'you will not go back to

him again? You will live a better life? Promise me that!

"No, I not promise. I not know. We French not think so bad as you. We do not live without intrigue and little love affairs, but I hate monsieur now, and I so long to see him suffer. *Mon Dieu*, but it will be good! Write me, *ma chère*, d'*Amerique*, and tell me of *la mère*, and now—it is good-by *vraiment*."

"She wrung Anna's hand, while great tears rolled down her cheeks as she said her last good-bye, and turning resolutely away walked from the ship to the landing, where she stood until the vessel was loosened from its moorings and moved slowly out to sea; then, wondering why she should care so much for *les Americaines*, she was driven to the station, where she took the train for Paris, eager for the *denouement* when Haverleigh would find how he had been deceived.



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CHAPTER XII.

THE DÉNOUEMENT.

ANNA'S party sailed from Havre on Friday, and it was not until the following Thursday that Mr. Haverleigh arrived at the chateau for the purpose of escorting her to Paris. During the last week he had spent much of his time with Eugenie, who, on her return from Havre, had been very gracious to him, and seemed in high spirits, breaking out suddenly into bursts of merriment on the most trifling provocation, and making him sometimes wonder if she were not going mad. She talked a great deal of '*la petite madame et le petit garçon*,' and showed him the rooms they were to occupy, and made him buy a handsome crib for his son, and predicted that Anna would not return to the dreary old chateau when once she had tasted the pleasures of Paris.

"Why do you keep her shut up there?" she asked him once, with a merry twinkle in her eyes. 'I'd run away.'

"You could hardly do that with Brunell on guard," Haverleigh replied; adding, after a pause: 'Madame Haverleigh, you know, has not been quite right in her

mind, and quiet was better for her. Her own family recommended it. They know all about it.'

"*Mon Dieu*, how the man lies !' was Eugenie's mental comment, but she merely said : ' Tell me more of Madame's family—of the sister and the brother,' and she persevered until she had heard from Haverleigh again all there was to know of the mother, and sister, and the boy Fred., of whom Eugenie seemed to like particularly to talk.

" ' I shall wait so impatiently for you to come with Madame,' she said to him when he left her to go to the chateau, and in her eyes there was a look which puzzled him, and which he could not fathom.

" If he had stayed a little longer she might have betrayed the secret which so tormented her ; but he was gone at last, and on his way to Chateau d'Or, wondering, as he went, if it were wise in him to take Anna to Paris, even for a week. At the chateau she was safe and out of the way, and gave him no trouble, while in Paris she might seriously interfere with his actions. On the whole, the chateau was the best place for her, he decided ; but he would give her more freedom there, and she should be at liberty to ride around the country as much as she chose, and go and come like any other sane person.

" Thus magnanimously arranging for Anna's future, Haverleigh arrived at the chateau in the afternoon train, and wondering a little that his carriage was not waiting for him, started to walk. It was the lovely month of June, when southern France is looking her loveliest, and the

grounds about the chateau seemed to him especially beautiful as he entered them by a little gate, of which he always kept the key.

" 'Anna ought to be happy here,' he said, and then, glancing up in the direction of her windows, it struck him as odd that every one was closed.

" Indeed the whole house had a shut-up, deserted appearance, and impressed him unpleasantly as he quickened his footsteps with a vague presentiment of evil. The first person he saw, on entering the court, was Celine, who, at sight of him, screamed out :

" 'Oh, Monsieur, what brings you here now, and where is Madame ? Has anything happened to the little master ?'

" 'Where is Madame ? What do you mean ? Where should she be but here, when I have come to take her to Paris ?' Haverleigh said, and Celine, violently excited, continued :

" 'Come to take her to Paris ? She's gone to Paris, long ago ; gone with Madame Verwest. Surely you know that ?'

" Surely he did not, and he shook so violently that he could not stand, but was obliged to sit down while Celine told him rapidly, and with a great many gesticulations what she knew of Madame's going away.

" A letter had come that Monsieur would be there to accompany Madame to Paris, and then Mistress Anna had packed her boxes, but taken no grand dresses—nothing but her plainest—and told Celine she was not to go, as

Fanny Shader could do all that was necessary, and Madame Verwest, too.'

"'Madame Verwest!' Haverleigh gasped, 'is she gone, too?'

"'To be sure she has; but it was after the telegram that she decided to go,' Celine said, 'for the day after the letter there came down a telegram from Madame Eugenie, bidding Madame Anna start at once, and you would meet her at Avignon; and she started last Wednesday is a week for Paris, with Madame Verwest, the baby, and Fanny Shader, and now you come after them. I know not what it may mean.'

"Celine had talked very rapidly, and a little incoherently, but Haverleigh had managed to follow her and understand at least one fact, his wife and child were gone, and had been gone for more than a week; and as they were not in Paris where could they be, and what did it all mean, and what was this about a telegram from Eugenie? He could not understand it, but bade Celine send Brunell to him at once. She obeyed, and Brunell came, but could throw no light upon the mystery. Anna had gone, as Celine said, and gone, too, in accordance with instructions received from Eugenie Arschinard, whose telegram he saw himself.

"'And you knew nothing of it?' he asked. 'You have never seen them in Paris?'

"'Never,' and the veins upon Haverleigh's forehead began to swell and stand out like ridges as he grew more and more amazed and excited.

"Even then he did not suspect the truth ; but, weak, vain man that he was, wondered if it could be some deep laid plot of Eugenie's to spirit his wife away in order to have him quite to herself. He did not believe that she had ever been reconciled to his marriage, even though she had professed so much friendship for Anna, and a French-woman like her was capable of anything, he knew. Still it seemed impossible that she should attempt a thing of that kind when detection was so easy. The tickets for the party were for Avignon, and thither he would go at once taking Brunell with him as an ally whose services would be invaluable in a search. Accordingly when the next train northward-bound passed the little hamlet, he was a passenger in it, chafing with impatience to arrive at Avignon, where he hoped to hear tidings of the fugitives. What he heard by diligent inquiry at station and hotel, utterly confounded him and made him for a time a perfect madman. An elderly woman and a young one, with nurse and baby, had come up on the Marseilles train, and been met by a large, dark-eyed lady, who had gone on with them next morning to Havre, which was their destination.

"Havre ! Havre !' Haverleigh gasped, the shadow of suspicion beginning to dawn upon him. 'Went to Havre, Brunell ? What could they go to Havre for ?'

"Only one thing that I can think of, but you'd better follow on and see,' was Brunell's reply ; and they did follow on, travelling day and night, as Anna had done before them, until Havre was reached and the records of passengers' names examined.

"There was a frightful imprecation, a horrid oath, which made the bystanders stare in amazement as Haverleigh read that on the——day of June, Mrs. Haverleigh, nurse, and child, had sailed for America in the *Europe*, and that Frederic Strong had accompanied them.

"'Frederic Strong! Who the —— is he, and where did he come from?' he said, as white with rage and trembling in every limb, he walked from the room with Brunell, who replied :

"'Was not Madame a Strong when you married her?'

"'Yes, and she had a brother Fred. But how came he here, and where is Madame Verwest, and what did Eugenie have to do with it? I tell you, Brunell, there is a hellish plot somewhere, but I'll unearth it. I'll show these women with whom they have to deal.'

"He clenched his fists and shook them at some imaginary person or persons, while a string of oaths issued from his lips, so horrid and dreadful that Brunell tried to stop him, but tried in vain; the storm of passion raged on, until, with a sudden cry and distortion of the body, the crazy man fell down in a fit. It did not last long, but it left its traces upon his face, which was livid in hue, while his eyes looked blood-shot and haggard, and he could scarcely walk without assistance.

"Still he insisted upon taking the first train for Paris, for until he saw Eugenie he was uncertain how to act. Anna might never have sailed for America at all, for where did she get the money? It might be a ruse to deceive him, and by the time he reached Paris he had made

up his mind that it was. Calling the first carriage he saw, he was driven rapidly to Eugenie's house, and ringing the bell violently, demanded to see Madame Arschainard. She was ready for him, and counted upon his doing just what he had done. She knew he would take the first train to Avignon, and the next train to Havre, and then she knew he would come to her.

"Send him to my room," was her reply to the servant's message, and in a moment he stood confronting her with a face more like that of an enraged animal than a human being.

"But she met his gaze unflinchingly, and when he said:

"Where are my wife and child?"

"She answered him fearlessly:

"I last saw them on the deck of *l'Europe*, as it put to sea; if living, they are in that vessel still, and almost to America. It is several days since they sailed."

"For a moment he could not speak, but stood glancing at her as a wild beast might glance at some creature it meant to annihilate. But she never flinched a hair, and her eyes grew larger and brighter, and her lips more firmly compressed, as she stood regarding him, with a thought of Agatha in her heart. This was her hour of revenge, and when he found voice to say:

"Why has she gone, and who helped her to go, and where is Madame Verwest? Tell me what you know, she burst forth impetuously, and answered him:

"Yes, I will tell you what I know, Ernest Haverleigh,

and I am glad, so glad, of this hour of settlement between us. I told you your wife had gone to America, and you ask me why. Strange question to ask about a wife, a mere girl, whom you have kept shut up so long a prisoner in reality, with no freedom whatever. A wife whom you have branded with insanity, when she is far more sane than you; a wife to whom you have told lie after lie, withholding her letters, and making her believe her mother dead and her old home desolate. Ay, Ernest Haverleigh, you may well turn pale, and grasp the chair, and breathe so heavily, and ask me how I know all this. I do know that they across the sea, in the little red house, thought her a lunatic, and mourned for her as such, while she, this side the water, mourned her mother dead and sister gone she knew not where, for you never told her; and you did all this to her, for why, I know not, except the foolish words she spoke in New York when she did not love you. What matter for love then, and she so young? In time it would have come. She meant you fair, and you, you darkened her young life, and made her almost crazy, and she could not love you. Only one did that truly—loved you to her snare and death, but I come not to speak of her yet, or I cannot say to you what I must. Madame Anna would have loved you in time, but you killed the love, and she was so desolate when I went to the chateau to hate her—yes, to hate her, and make merry of her because she was your wife. I did not want to be your wife, remember that; not now, not yet. I like freedom too well, but by and by, when I am older, and

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the hair is gray, and the rouge and the powder will not cover the wrinkles, I meant to be Madame Haverleigh, and respectable, and go and live in England, and make the strict madames and mademoiselles think much of me; but this little pale American came between, and I meant to hate her, but could not, for the sweetness and helplessness in the blue eyes the—oh, *mon Dieu*, the look of the dead darling in her face. So I liked her much, and pitied her more, and then—oh, woe is me!—then I found at last my darling's grave—found it there at that dreary place. Agatha, my sister, whom you ruined and drove mad, really mad, and killed, you villain! Oh, you villain! how I hate you, and how I would tear your heart out and break it as you broke hers, only I want you to live and hear me out, you villain!'

"Here Eugenie stopped to breathe, for she had wrought herself up to such a pitch of frenzy that she seemed in danger of apoplexy, and clutched at the fastenings of her dress about her throat as if to loosen them. Haverleigh saw the strange look in her face, and how she gasped for breath, but was himself too much paralyzed to move. At the mention of Agatha, the sweet rose from Normandy, whom he had almost loved, and whose memory was still green in his heart, he had thrown up both his hands and then sank into the chair, unable to stand any longer. That Agatha Wynde should have been the sister of Eugenie stunned him completely, and made him for a time forget even Anna and his child. At last, as the colour faded from Eugenie's face and she breathed more freely, he found voice to say :

"'Agatha your sister, yours! I never dreamed of that.'

"'No, of course not, but you knew she was somebody's darling, the white-haired old man's who died with a curse of you on his lips. You lured the simple peasant girl away, and told her you meant fair, and because she was pure, and innocent, and could not otherwise be won, you made believe marry her; but it was no marriage, no priest, and when she found it out she went raving mad and died.'

"Haverleigh might have taunted the woman with the fact that she had had something to do with the deception practised upon Agatha, but she did not give him a chance, for she went on to accuse herself:

"'For this deed of blackness, I, too, was to blame, but I never dreamed it was my darling, for whom I would have died; never guessed it was she of whom I was so madly jealous, those days and nights when you left me so much, and I knew a younger, fairer face than mine attracted you. I was not fair then, for I knew of Agatha's flight, and was hunting for her everywhere, and all the time you had her in Paris, and I was working against her. Oh, Agatha, Agatha, sister, I'd give my life to have you back, but you are gone, and on that little grave in southern France I swore you should be avenged; and so——' turning now to Haverleigh who sat with his face buried in his hands—'and so I learned the story of the little American, and wrote to her friends, for I knew the mother was not dead, as you told her, Heaven only knows

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why ! I wrote, I say, and the boy Fred. started himself for France. Do you remember my telling you I had advertised for an English maid, and you remember the *Fanny Shader* of whom I thought so much ? That was Frederick Strong, in girl's attire.'

"Haverleigh lifted his head then and ejaculated, 'the devil,' then dropped it again, and Eugenie went on. 'You begin, no doubt, to see the plot. I took Fanny to Chateau d'Or, and left her there, and planned the visit to Paris, and all that happened next. I telegraphed to Madame just as I agreed. I met her at Angouleme; I accompanied her to Havre; I engaged her passage, and I paid the bills for her and Fred., not for Madame Verwest. She paid her own. She was an unexpected character in the little drama. That she has gone to America, I know. Why she went I do not know. Now I have told you all, and Agatha is avenged.'

"He neither looked up, nor moved, nor spoke as she swept from the room. Indeed, although he heard the trail of her heavy silk as she went past him, he hardly knew she had gone, so completely confounded and stupefied was he with what she had said to him. That she, for whom he had done so much, and on whose fidelity he had so implicitly trusted, should turn against him, hurt him cruelly; that she should be the sister of Agatha confounded and bewildered him; and that Anna had fled with his boy to America, where his villainy, and treachery, and deceit would be fully exposed, and that Madame Verwest had gone with her, and thus virtually turned against

him, maddened and enraged him, and took from him for a time the power even to move, and he sat perfectly quiet for at least fifteen minutes after Eugenie had left him. Then, with an oath and a clenching of his fists at something invisible, he sprang up, exclaiming, 'I'll follow them to America and claim my own. The law will give me my wife, or at least my child, and that will stab them deeply.'

"Excited and buoyed up with this new idea, he felt himself growing strong again to act, and without seeking to see Eugenie, he left the house, and the next steamer which left Havre for America, carried him as a passenger.



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CHAPTER XIII.

IN AMERICA.

"THE ship *l'Europe* came slowly up New York harbour, one pleasant summer morning, and among the eager crowd gathered on its deck, none were more eager and expectant, ay, and nervous too, than our friends Madame Verwest and Anna. The latter had been sick all the voyage, and kept her state-room, tormented with a thousand groundless fears as to what her infuriated husband might do. He was capable of anything, she knew, and felt that he would follow her to America, and try to get her again in his power. It was Fred. who thoughtlessly suggested that he might telegraph to New York for officers to be ready to arrest his runaway wife as a lunatic, and after that idea once lodged in her brain, Anna never rested a moment, night or day; and when at last New York was in sight, and she was forced to dress herself and go on deck, she looked more like a ghost than the blooming girl who had sailed down that very harbour not quite two years before. Madame Verwest had been very silent during the entire voyage, and had never given the slightest reason why she had left the chateau. Nor did Anna care

to question her. She was satisfied to have her with her and cling to her as a mother.

" 'Do you think he has telegraphed, and what shall we do if he has? You will never let them have me,' she said, as the ship was nearing the wharf, and she gazed in terror at the promiscuous crowd waiting there, and mistaking the custom-house officers for the police come to arrest.

" Madame Verwest herself had thought it possible that Haverleigh might telegraph, but she did not admit it. She only said :

" 'They will take both of us, if either. I shall not leave you and your friends will soon know of it.'

" Thus reassured, Anna grew more calm, and waited till the ship was fast at the landing and the passengers free to leave. There was no officer there, no telegram, and our party took the first train which left next morning on the Harlem Road for Millfield. A telegram, however, had preceded them, and the whole town was in a state of wild excitement when it was known that Anna was coming back, and why. Up to this time but little had been said of Fred's departure for Europe, and though there were surmises of something wrong, nothing definite was known until the telegram was received, when the story came out and set the town on fire. Everybody told everybody else, so that long before the train was due the history of Anna's life in France had been told a thousand times, and had Ernest Haverleigh then appeared in the streets, he would assuredly have been torn in pieces by the crowd which surged toward the dépôt long before the train was

due. Everybody was there; those who had known Anna in her girlhood and those who had not, the new-comers who only knew her story and waited for a glimpse of her. Oh, how white, and frightened, and wild she looked when at last she came and stepped upon the platform. Fred's arm was around her, and behind her came Madame Verwest, carrying the child, which slept soundly all through the exciting scene.

"Mother—where's mother?' the pallid lips asked as Anna's feet touched the ground, and then her mother's arms were around her, and the tired head dropped on the maternal bosom with a low pitiful cry, and it was whispered in the crowd that she had fainted.

They took her home to the low red house, and laid her in the little room she used to occupy, and which she had once so despised. It seemed like heaven to her now, as she sank down among the snowy pillows, and felt the sweet breath of the summer air, laden with the perfume of the new-mown hay, and the lilies of which she had talked so much to Madame Verwest.

"Oh, mother, Mary, I am so glad,' she said, as she saw them bending over her, and felt that she was safe. 'No one can get me here. You'll never let me go, for he will come after me; he is coming now,' and with a shudder she drew the sheet over her face as if to hide herself from the dreaded husband coming to take her away.

"After that Anna knew no more of what was passing about her for days, and even weeks. Nature had borne all it could, and she lay almost motionless, and utterly

unconscious of everything. But never sure was queen tended with more care than she for whom everybody cared, and whose room was filled with tokens of remembrance, flowers and fruit, and such masses of white lilies, for these had been her favourites, and every school-boy in town considered it an honour to wade into the pond, knee-deep, and even imperil his life to secure the fragrant blossoms.

"From the first Madame Verwest was a puzzle to all and a very little in the way. It is true she was the nurse who took the entire charge of the baby, and who, more than any one else, seemed to understand and know what to do for Anna. But still she was in the way—a stranger, who had not been expected, but whose only fault seemed to be that she stared too much at Mrs. Strong and at the people at Millfield, especially the older inhabitants, and asked too many questions about them. It was a little strange, too, how fond she was of roaming about the town, and exploring it in all its parts. Sometimes, with the baby in her arms, she would leave the house in the morning, and not return again until dinner time, and Mrs. Strong had heard of her more than once in the graveyard, studying the old headstones; and again down near the boat-house by the river, sitting apparently in deep thought upon the grass, with Anna's baby sleeping on her lap. At first Mrs. Strong felt some natural anxiety for the safety of the child, but when she saw how it clung to Madame Verwest, and how devoted she seemed to be to its every movement, she came to trust her fully, and to forget all

else in her great concern for her own child, who grew weaker and weaker every day, until to those who watched her so closely there seemed little hope that she would ever rally from the death-like stupor into which she had fallen. Nothing roused her to the least degree of consciousness or motion, except, indeed, the mention of her husband's name. As an experiment Madame Verwest bent over her and said:

"*Ma petite*, do you remember Monsieur Haverleigh of Chateau d'Or?"

"Then there was a quivering of the lids, and a shiver ran through Anna's form, and she whispered faintly:

"'Yes, yes, and he is coming; he is almost here, but don't let him get me.'

"And four days later he came, on the six o'clock train, from which he stepped like a prince of the royal blood, and, confronting the first man he met upon the platform, haughtily demanded if he knew 'whether Mrs. Ernest Haverleigh, formerly Miss Anna Strong, were in town.'

"All the town was watching for Haverleigh, and threatening him with dire vengeance should he attempt the removal of his wife by force. As it chanced, the person addressed was a burly truckman, and who, with his whip in his hand, looked a rather formidable personage, as, in answer to Haverleigh's question, he replied:

"'Yes, *sir*, the lady you mean is in town sick to death, they say, and if you are that contemptible dog who shut

her up and called her crazy, and told them infernal lies, the quicker you leave these parts the healthier for you, if you don't want to be lucked in the mill-pond.'

"Haverleigh was too much astonished to speak at first. That he, the proud Englishman, should be thus addressed by a low, ignorant, working Yankee was more than flesh and blood like his could bear, and his face was purple with rage, and his eyes gleamed savagely as he replied :

"Who are you that dares speak to me in this manner and do you know who I am ?'

"'Yes, *sir-ee*, I know darned well who you are,' the man replied, nothing intimidated by Haverleigh's threatening manner, but strengthened by the crowd gathering so fast around him.

"It had circulated rapidly that Haverleigh had come, and was 'sassing' Ben. Rogers, and the idlers gathered near at once, eager to hear and ready to defend, if necessary, their comrade, who continued :

"'You are the confoundest, meanest, contemptiblist animal that the Lord ever suffered to live, and I am Benjamin Franklin Rogers, at your service, and if you open your dirty mouth again I'll give you a taste of this horse-whip ; so, if you want to save your British hide, skeddaddle quick for the Widder Strong's, as I s'pose you must go there ; but, mark my words, me and these chaps, my friends'—sweeping his arm toward the crowd—'will go with you to see you do no harm, and if the widder says *duc: you*, we'll do it, or tar you and ride you on a rail, or any other honour such as we can give you *gratis* for nothin'.

"Whether Haverleigh was intimidated, or too proud to speak, I do not know. He made no reply except to glare like a madman upon the speaker and the crowd, which made way for him to pass, and then followed at a little distance as he moved rapidly in the direction of Mrs. Strong's. The news of his arrival had preceded him, and with a face white with terror Mrs. Strong was waiting for him, and so was Madame Verwest. *She* was neither pale nor frightened. She had carried the baby to Anna's room and bidding Mary watch it, had left the apartment, and, locking the door after her, joined Mrs. Strong in the parlour below, where they sat together until the sound of the coming rabble drew them both to the door.

"Very proudly and erect Haverleigh moved on, never once glancing back at the crowd behind him. But he knew that it was there, and heard the muttered menaces as he opened the gate and walked to the door. It was Madame Verwest who met him and asked: 'Ernest Haverleigh, why are you here?'

"'Why?' he repeated, and his voice was like a savage growl. 'Why am I here? I am here for my wife and my son, and I intend to have them, too. I'd like to see the law that can keep them from me, so lead the way quickly, for I shall be off in the next train.'

"'Never with Anna and the baby. Never, while I have the power to prevent it, as I have,' Madame Verwest replied, and then all the pent-up fury of the terrible man burst out, and there were flecks of white foam about his lips as he cursed the woman who boldly kept him at bay,

with the most horrible of curses, calling her at last by the vilest name a woman can be called, and asking for her wedding ring and the certificate of her marriage.

“‘Ernest Haverleigh, hush; nor dare to speak to me, *your mother*, like that again.’

“The voice which said these words was very steady and low, but Haverleigh heard it distinctly, and, grasping the back of the chair near which he was standing, repeated: ‘My mother; you, who were only my nurse. You call yourself my mother!’

“‘Yes, and before Heaven I am your mother; listen while I tell you what you should have known before, but for a promise to the dead.’

“He was still staring at her, with the same corpse-like pallor on his face, and the look of a wild beast in his eyes, but he did not speak, for something in the woman before him kept him silent while she went on:

“‘I am your mother, and I thought I was your father’s wife, until after you were born, when there came a day of horrid awakening, and I found I was betrayed by the man I loved, and for whom I had left my home, for I was young and innocent once, and pretty, too, they said; but I was poor and hated poverty, and when this rich man came with honeyed words and fair promises, I believed and trusted him to my ruin, and went with him over the sea—for I am American born, and not English, as you suppose. We staid in lodgings in London till you were born, and by that time a face fairer than mine had come between me and your father, a woman he meant to marry,

and so he told me the truth of his villainy, and when I found I was not his wife, I think I went mad for a time, and when I came to myself I was in poorer lodgings in an obscure part of London, where I passed for Mr. Haverleigh's house-keeper, who had served him so faithfully that he would not cast me off in my trouble. That was the lie he told, and they believed him and were kind to me for the sake of the money he paid them. You were at Grasmere then with your father, whom in spite of everything I loved, and to whom I went, begging him to let me have the care of my child if nothing more. To this he consented, the more readily because he was about to marry my rival, and you might be in the way. He loved you, I do believe, and he trusted me, but he made me swear not to divulge my real relation to you. I was your nurse, your foster-mother, nothing more. There might be no children of the marriage, he said, and if so, he should make you his heir, and did not wish you to know the stain upon your birth. There *were* no children, and as if to punish him for his sin to me, his wife died within the year, and he was left alone and made you his heir, so that when he died all he had was left to you, except a thousand pounds given to me, whom he designated as the foster-mother of his child.

"You, as you grew up, believed the woman who died at Grasmere was your mother, and that I was only your nurse; but that was false; I was your mother, else I had never followed your fortunes as I have, and clung to you through all as only a mother can cling to the son whose

wickedness she knows, and whom she cannot forsake. You thought me in your power, because you fancied I had been indiscreet in my youth, and that your threats to expose me kept me quiet to do your bidding. There you were mistaken. It was the mother loving you through everything which made me the same as a prisoner at Chateau d'Or, where I was really happier than when following you about. Because it suited you, I consented to be Madame Verwest, a Frenchwoman, and for you I have lived a life of deceit, which, thank Heaven, is over now. I meant to release Anna myself sometime, on the plea of *your* insanity, if by no other, for there is madness in your father's family, and you are mad at times. But others planned the escape, and I gladly followed to America, my native land, and to Millfield, my old home, for I am Milly Gardner, step-sister to Anna's father, and the one you told me went to the bad, and was the only blot on the family.'

"Up to this time there had been a listener to Madame Verwest's story—Mrs. Strong, who, terrified at the first appearance of Haverleigh, had fled to the adjoining room, where she sank into a chair faint and helpless, and thus heard all that was said by Madame Verwest. At the mention of Milly Gardner, however, she sprang to her feet and ran to the woman's side, exclaiming:

"'Oh, Milly, Milly! I have heard so much of you from my husband, and from him learned to love you even while believing the story I know now to be false. It is all so strange that you should be here when we thought

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you dead years ago. And *you* are *his* mother,' she continued, pointing to Haverleigh. 'Send him away, if you have any power over him; he must not see my child.'

"The sound of Mrs. Strong's voice speaking of Anna roused Haverleigh from his stupor, or rather state of bewilderment, and with a savage oath he started forward, exclaiming:

"*'I shall* see your child, and take her, too, for she is mine. Stand aside, woman—hag—beldame—who dares to call herself my mother,' he continued as Madame Verwest laid her hands upon his arm. 'It is a lie you have told me. My mother was she who lived and died at Grasmere, and you—you—are——'

"He did not finish the sentence, for his excitement and passion had been increasing every moment, while his face grew more and more swollen and purple, until the flecks of foam gathered more thickly about his lips, which gave forth a bubbling sound as he fell across the chair in a fit.

"Then the mother woke again in Madame Verwest, and kneeling by the side of her tossing, struggling son, she lifted up his head, and cared for him as tenderly as when he was a new-born baby and first lay upon her bosom. The terrible convulsions ceased at last, and the natural colour came back to his face; but the eyes, which fastened themselves upon her with such a look of hate, were the eyes of a madman, who had in his heart intense hatred and even murderous designs toward the woman who still held his head upon her lap, and dropped her tears upon his face.

"'Woman—fiend—liar—I'll have your life!' he screamed, as he sprang to his feet, and with clenched fists darted toward his mother, who stepped aside to avoid the blow, and thus made way for the men outside on the walk, who, attracted by the loud, angry tones, had come nearer and nearer to the door, which they reached just as Haverleigh rose to his feet and sprang toward his mother.

"'Hold, villain—stop that!' the foremost of them cried; and Haverleigh was caught by both arms, and held as in a vice by two men, who yet had hard work to keep him from breaking loose from their grasp.

"A moment sufficed to convince them that it was no sane man they held, and then arose a call for ropes with which to bind him. I think the whole town knew by this time what was going on, and the street in front of Mrs. Strong's was densely packed with an excited throng, but only a few entered the house, and these the more intimate acquaintances of the family. That Haverleigh was raving mad was a fact no one doubted, and to secure his person was a step which seemed imperative, but was hard of accomplishment, for he was naturally strong, and his excitement lent to him a double strength. But he was mastered at last, and carried bodily to the village hall, where he was to be kept securely until some decision was reached as to what should be done with him. That decision was reached before the close of the next day, for he grew more and more furious and uncontrollable, until the asylum seemed the only alternative, and thither they

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carried him at last, and placed him in the strong room, as it was called, where, struggle as he might, he could not get free or burst the bars and bolts which held him.

"Meanwhile, in Millfield, Madame Verwest, as we will call her, had told her story more fully to Mrs. Strong, while Anna, too, when she was better and could bear it, heard that the woman who from the first had been so kind to her in Chateau d'Or, was in reality her mother-in-law, and the grandmother of the little boy Arthur. Like poor Agatha Wynde she had been lured from her place in Boston, where she was employed in a straw shop. The man who gave his name to her as Stevens, was an Englishman, and rich, and she went with him trustingly and honourably, as she believed, until the dreadful day when she found how she had been deceived. Even then she loved him and clung to her child, whom she was allowed to care for on condition that she passed as his nurse or foster-mother, and to this promise she held for many years, during which time Haverleigh died and left by will all his fortune to his son, except a thousand pounds bequeathed to the wretched woman who stood by him when he died; and, when, selfish to the last, he said: 'Don't let the boy know the story of his birth. Let him think that Mabel was his mother,' she answered him, 'I will,' and bore her secret bravely, and cared for the boy, and was a very slave to his wishes, because of the love she bore him.

"Whatever opinion he might have had of her, her influence over him was great, and he really seemed to have

a genuine affection for her as the only mother he had ever known, and would never suffer her to leave his service, as he called it. He paid her well, told her most of his plans, counselled with her often, and at times evinced for her a liking and respect very dear to the woman who longed so much to fall upon his neck and claim him as her son. She had been with him in Scotland, and London, and Paris, and at last, six years before his marriage with Anna, had gone with him to Chateau d'Or, which he had just bought, and where for weeks he held a high carnival with his wild dissipated friends. The quiet and seclusion of the place just suited his mother, who at his request had, before leaving Paris, taken the name of Madame Verwest.

"Up to that time she had been Mrs. Stevens, for she clung to the name she once believed to be her own, but it pleased her son to have her Madame Verwest, and a Frenchwoman, so a Frenchwoman she was; and because she liked the chateau so much he permitted her to stay there in charge of the servants, who held her in great esteem. The isolated position of the chateau was just suited to some of Haverleigh's nefarious schemes, and poor Agatha Wynde was not the first young girl who had been immured within its walls. A fair-haired German from Munich, and a dark-eyed Italian from Verona had been hidden there for months until the search for them by their grief-stricken friends was over. When poor Agatha came there she had been so fair, so sweet and so confiding, that Madame Verwest had taken the erring, repentant girl into her heart, and loved her like a mother.

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" 'We don't think quite the same,' Agatha had said to her during a lucid interval a day or two before she died. 'We are not the same religion. You Protestant, I *Catholique*; but you love Jesus, you ask Him to forgive, and so do I; Him and Mary, too; and He will, and you will come to Heaven after poor Agatha some day. I sure you will, for there be now and then some Protestants there.'

"This was quite a concession for one so devout as Agatha, and Madame Verwest had smiled faintly when it was made, but she kissed the pallid lips and brow where death had already set its seal, and when at last all was over she placed a golden crucifix in the white hands folded so meekly over the heart which would never know pain again. She telegraphed to Haverleigh, who was dining with Eugenie when he received the message, and who read the telegram without a word of comment, and then, lest the jealous eyes watching him so closely should see it, he lighted a match, and applying it to the paper, saw it burn to ashes. But he could not seem quite natural, and as soon as dinner was over he excused himself, and started directly for the station, leaving Eugenie to speculate upon the nature of the telegram which had so plainly affected his spirits, and taken him from her earlier than his wont. Alas she little guessed the truth, or dreamed of the beautiful girl lying so cold and still in her coffin, and on whose white face even Haverleigh's tears fell, when he looked upon her dead, and remembered what she was when he first saw her, a lovely peasant-girl in Normandy, singing by her father's door. They buried

her quietly, and then Haverleigh returned to Paris and Eugenie, while over the lonely grave Madame Verwest vowed that no other maiden should ever come there as Agatha had come; and so, when she first heard of Anna, she resolved upon something desperate, until told that Anna was a wife in very deed, and that no stain was on her name. Then, when she learned who she was, and whence she came, her heart went out to the desolate creature with a great throb of love, which strengthened every day, and was such as a real mother feels for a suffering, ill-used child. Many times, when listening to Anna's talk of her New England home, she had been tempted to tell her who she was, but had refrained from doing so, hoping always that the day was not far distant when she could disclose everything, and be her real self again. That day had come at last, and with no fear of the dreadful man who had ruled her for so many years, she told her story and waited the verdict of her wondering listeners.

"Anna was the first to speak. Motioning Madame Verwest to her bedside, she wound her arms around her neck, and said:

"'I loved you as a mother at Chateau d'Or, and am so glad to find you are my mother truly, and the grandmother of little Arthur.'

"Neither were Mrs. Strong and Mary backward in their demonstrations of friendship and esteem for the woman who had suffered so much since the day, years before, when she had left her home in Millfield and returned no more. Could the inmates of the red house have blotted

from their minds the memory of the poor lunatic who, not many miles away, was chafing and raging like a newly-caged animal, they would have been very happy these last summer days; and, to a certain degree, they were happy, though, in her low, nervous state Anna could never quite put from her mind the fear lest her dreaded husband should by some means escape from his confinement and come to do her harm. But the bolts and bars were very strong which held him, else he might perhaps have escaped, for he seemed endowed with superhuman strength, and clutched savagely at the iron gratings of his cell, shaking them at times as if they were but dried twigs in his hands.

"He was terrible in his insanity, and only his keeper and physician ever ventured near him. At them he sprang and snapped viciously, like a dog chained to a post, while he filled the room with the most horrid oaths, cursing Madame Verwest, who had dared to call him her child.

"He who was highly born, the son of a gentleman, the child of a servant, a nurse, a Yankee, and illegitimate at that; curse her! curse her! she lies! she lies! she played me false, and I hate her!" he would scream, when his mother was the subject of his thoughts.

"Again when it was Eugenie, he grew, if possible, more desperate than before, and would utter such oaths that even his keeper, hardened as he was by similar scenes, shrunk from the hearing of the blasphemous words.

"Of Anna and Agatha he never spoke until toward

the last, when, as if he had worn his fierce nature out, he grew more quiet, and would sit for hours perfectly still, with his head bowed upon his hands, intently brooding over something in the past. Was he thinking of Agatha, and the cottage far away in Normandy, where he first saw her singing in the sunshine, with the sweet, shy look of innocence in her soft eyes, or did she come up before him as he last looked upon her, cold, white, and dead in her coffin, ruined by him, who had used every art in his power to lure her into the snare? It would seem that she came to him in both phases, for at times he would smile faintly and whisper, very soft and low;

"*Ma petite, ma chérie. Venez avec moi à Paris. Je vous aime bien.*"

"To her he always spoke in French, with the utmost tenderness, saying to her as he thought himself bending over her coffin:

"I am sorry, Aggie, I am so sorry, and I wish I had left you in your home as innocent as I found you, poor little Aggie, so white and cold; don't look at me with those mournful eyes; don't touch me with those death-like hands; don't you know you are dead, *dead*, and dead folks lie still? Don't touch me, I say;' and cries of fear would echo through the hall as the terror-stricken man fancied himself embraced and held fast by the arms which for so long had been at rest beneath the sod in southern France.

"It's the French girl after him now,' the keeper would say, as he heard the cries and pleadings for some one 'to

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lie still and take their cold hands off.' 'It's the French girl after him now, *death hug*, you know. He'll be quieter when it's t'other one;' the 't'other one' referring to Anna who was often present to the disordered mind of the man but who never excited him like Agatha.

"He was not afraid of Anna, but would hold long conversations with her, trying sometimes to convince her of her insanity, and again telling her that he loved her and always had, notwithstanding what he had heard her say of him in New York. It was in the spring following the summer when Anna arrived at Millfield that this softer, quieter mood came upon him, and with it a debility, and loss of strength and appetite, and gradual wasting away, which told that his days were numbered. Years of dissipation had undermined his naturally strong constitution, and he had no surplus vitality on which to draw, so that the decay, once commenced, was very rapid, and just a year from the day Anna came back to Millfield he was dead.

"Madame Verwest was with him when he died; for, though he never asked for her or for any one, the mother love was too strong to keep her from him, and she went to him unbidden when she heard how sick he was. Whether her presence was any gratification to him or not, she never knew, for he expressed nothing, either by word or look. Once, when she spoke to him of Anna and his boy, there came a faint flush upon his face, and he repeated the names:

" 'Anna—Arthur.'

"Again, when she said to him:

"Ernest, you have much money and land in your possession. If you die, where do you wish it to go?"

"For a moment he regarded her intently, and then replied:

"Anna, Arthur—mother."

"The last word was spoken softly, kindly, and brought a rain of tears from the poor woman, who had clung to him so many years, and never heard that name from him before. Two days after that he died, and went to the God who deals justly with all His creatures. They bought him an elegant coffin, and dressed him in the finest of broadcloth, and brought him up to Millfield and buried him in the quiet graveyard behind the church, where he sleeps till the resurrection morning. Anna did not see him. She could not; but she suffered Madame Verwest to take Arthur with her to the grave, and so the mother and son stood together while the coffin was lowered to the earth, and the solemn words were uttered, 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust.'

"To the little boy the weeping woman said:

"That's your father, Arthur; your father they are burying;" but Arthur was thinking more of the sunshine, and birds, and flowers, than of the ceremonial which had no meaning for him, and releasing himself from his grandmother, started in pursuit of a butterfly, and his loud baby laugh mingled with the sound of the dirt rattling down upon the coffin which contained what had been his father."

Here Hal Morton paused, and pointed toward a half-

closed shutter, through which the early morning was breaking. We had sat up all night, he telling and I listening to this strange story, which I felt was not finished yet, for I must know more of Anna, and if anything had ever been heard from Eugenie, who, however bad as she might seem, had shown herself in some respects a noble woman, with many noble instincts and kindly feelings; so I said to my companion :

"Never mind the daylight, Hal. We will order a tip-top breakfast by and by, and meantime you finish the story and tell me more of Anna and Eugenie. Did they ever hear from her, and did Anna and the child get Haverleigh's money?"

"Yes, they got Haverleigh's money," Hal replied. "Anna and Arthur between them. It was their's lawfully, you know, and there was a million in all. Think of Anna Strong a millionaire. But it did not hurt her one whit, or change her in the least from the sweet, modest, half-frightened woman who came back to Millfield in place of the gay Anna we had known. She did not wear mourning for her husband; she could not with that consciousness in her heart of relief because he was dead; but she always wore black or white, relieved perhaps with a knot of ribbon or flower, and never was there a fairer sight than was she in this sober attire as she went about our village, seeking the sick or suffering, and giving to the poor of the wealth that God had given her. She built her mother a handsome house on an elevation just out of the town, and a wing was added for Madame Ver-

west, who was so much one of the family that she could not leave them.

"And so the working in the shoe-shop was at an end, with the smell of wax and leather, and the horrors of Chateau d'Or were past, and there were people foolish enough to say that it paid after all to marry a madman when the end had brought such peace. To Eugenie, Anna had often written, and when all was over she wrote again telling of the death. Then the French inconsistency of character showed itself, and the woman to whom Haverleigh had always been kind and indulgent, wept and refused to be comforted, partly for her loss, and more, I think, because no provision had been made for her.

"*'Mon Dieu!'* she wrote to Anna, 'to think no little legatee *pour moi*, who have given everything for him. Not so much as one, what you say, one dollar, and I so poor, too. Not so much to buy one pair of gloves, and they so cheap at *Au Bon Marche, trois francs et demi*, and so good. Shall I send you a box of black—bah, *non, ma cherie*. You not wear that for he, but *me*, I must wear *crepe*, and bombasin, one leetle month, for my heart all French, all *crepe*, all ache, *douleur*, for the bad monsieur, who once love Eugenie. He have account at bank and I draw check at will, and have draw till only one thousand franc left, which you make two hundred dollars. Then what I must do? I grow old and want no more monsieur—bah! I hate him all. I look in my glass and see Eugenie most forty, with some gray hairs, some

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wrinkles, which paste will not cover. No monsieur want me for wife: I want no monsieur. So I must work; must hang out the sign, '*Robes et Costumes. Madame Eugenie*,' and tie to it some bonnets and caps. Oh, but it will go hard after all the ease, to have so many girls round, and I must scold them all the time; perhaps I act again, but it I hate so much; it brings me *les messieurs* again, and I won't have it. For you, you so happy with *beaucoup d'argent*, no more nasty shop, no more wax, no more leather, no more smell-bad; but for me leather, and wax, and smell-bad, *toujours, toujours, Mon Dieu*, 'tis quite hard, and I give all to him, all; and if he not die, what you call him, crazy, he remember Eugenie in his—his little last testament, you call it, or some book like that. Oh, me, I starve, I die. I have the many girls around me with the bad to sew, and you have the silk, the satin, the opera, and the lunch at *Trois Freres*—bien—'tis right, but hard, and it takes so few money to set me up, quite. *Me comprenez-vous?*

"Anna did understand the hint, and sent to the French-woman, who had done her great service, ten thousand dollars, which Eugenie acknowledged with rapture.

"'Enough, with *prudence* and *save*, to keep me lady all my life. No need for the girls now to sew *les robes*; no leather, no wax, no smell-bad, forevermore, but highly respectable woman, who let rooms to *les Americains* and bring them *cafe* in the morning.'

"This was Eugenie's reply, and after that Anna heard

no more from her, but supposed her happy as a highly respectable woman and keeper of lodgers."

The mention of Eugenie's *cafe* was too much for Hal and myself in our exhausted condition, and ringing the bell, we ordered *cafe* for two in our apartments, and, while we were sipping the delicious beverage, I said to my companion :

"Hal, you have told a splendid story, but I must hear a little more. You were in love with Anna Strong before she married Haverleigh. Did the love come back after he was dead?"

Hal made no answer for a moment, then he said :

"I will not tell you another word to-day; nor have I time. We must see a little of Marseilles, and to-night be off for Nice."

"And not stop at Cannes?" I asked and he replied:

"No, not stop at Cannes—a stupid place, full of English. Nice is the spot in all the world for me."

So we went straight to Nice, and were quartered at the Grand Hotel, and our rooms opened upon the spacious garden, where, looking from my window in the morning, I saw several groups of people, one of which attracted my attention at once. A beautiful boy of three years old was running up and down a gravelled walk, followed by a smart-looking French maid, who always brought him back to two ladies sitting on a bench under the trees.

One lady was old and draped in black, but the other was young, and oh, so fair in her morning-dress of white,

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with a blue ribbon in her wavy hair. There were diamonds and costly gems sparkling on her hands, and everything about her betokened the lady of wealth and culture.

"Who is she, I wonder?" I was saying to myself, when I saw Hal enter the garden and walk straight up to her, while a shout from the little boy showed that he was no stranger.

Stranger! I should say not by the *kiss* he gave that girl or woman, with me looking on, and saying aloud:

"There's Anna, sure!"

Yes, it was Anna come abroad with Madame Verwest and her child, and her former maid, Celine, whom she had found at the Chateau d'Or, where they had stopped for a few days. And an hour after I was introduced to Mrs. Haverleigh, and sat opposite her at the breakfast we had in her parlour, and studied her closely, and decided that Hal had not overrated her charms.

She was beautiful, with that soft, refined, unconscious beauty that one rarely sees in a really handsome face. There was nothing of the doll about her. She was a thorough woman, graceful, pure and lovely, with a look in her blue eyes which told of Chateau d'Or and the dreamy day and night watches there. But those were over now. Chateau d'Or was rented for a series of years, at a price merely nominal, and so that was off her hands, and the greatest care she had was the care of her immense fortune. Of course Hal had offered to relieve her of this care, and she had accepted his offer, and given him herself as a retaining fee.

We kept with her after that, or Hal did, and I kept at a distance, and talked with Madame Verwest, and romped with Arthur until we reached Venice, and there, one moonlight night, Hal and Anna were married, and we made the tour of the Grand Canal for a wedding trip, and the canopy over the bride was of pure white satin, and in the soft, silvery moonlight we sang the "Star-Spangled Banner," our two boatmen joining in the chorus with their sweet Italian voices.

That was long ago, and Hal Morton has a boy of his own now, and a blue-eyed baby daughter too, and he lives in one of the finest palaces on the Connecticut river, and goes to Europe every year, and Madame Verwest lives with him; and Fred. has been through college, and is on the Continent now; and Mary is married to a Methodist minister, and Mrs. Strong is dead; and Eugenie—well when the Commune swept over Paris, Eugenie herself went into the street and cared for the wounded and dying, and hurled a stone at a Frenchman who was attacking an American, and kept him at bay, and got the young man into her own house, and bandaged up his head, and called him "Charles," and asked him if he remembered her.

Fred. did remember her then, and staid with her till the fierce storm was over and he was free to leave beleaguered and desecrated Paris and go on his way to Scotland, where he found Hal Morton and Anna in their beautiful home among the Highlands, not very far from Loch Katrine, and so I finish this story of Chateau d'Or.

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I HAD crossed in the bright October sunshine from Calais to Dover without once taking refuge in the close, pent-up saloon, which is like a little purgatory when the waters of the Channel are stirred to their depths, and the boat is tossed like a feather from one angry wave to another. It was very quiet that day, and the sea was literally like glass, with the sunshine falling so softly upon it. Nobody had been sick except a fair young girl, with *bride* unmistakably stamped upon her, from her dainty travelling-dress to the trustful glance of the blue eyes lifted so often and lovingly to the face of the young man beside her. Once, when the boat rocked more than usual, she had turned white to her lips, and, dropping her golden head upon the shoulder of her husband, had kept it there in a weary, languid kind of way, while I speculated about her, wondering who she was, and where she was going, and hoping that the party of American girls, who seemed to monopolize and fill the entire deck, would take note of her,

and see that at least one of my countrywomen had taste, and style and beauty combined.

"Such frights as the English women are, with their horrid shoes, their dresses made before the flood, and that everlasting white thing tied high about their throats," I had heard one of them say, and, while flushing with indignation, had felt, to a certain degree, that their criticism was just, and that, taken as a whole, the English ladies did not compare favourably with their American sisters, so far as grace and style were concerned.

But this little bride, with the blue eyes and golden hair, might have come from the show-rooms of the most fashionable modiste on Broadway, and not have shamed her mantua-maker. She had evidently been gotten up in Paris, and I watched her with a good deal of interest until the cliffs of Dover were in sight, and we were nearing the shores of England and home. Then, in seeing to my boxes, which were the very last to be brought from the boat, I forgot everything, and came near being left by the train waiting to take us to London.

"Hurry up, Miss, you've only quarter of a second," a porter cried, as, in my bewilderment, I was looking for a carriage. "Here, here! this way! Second class?" he screamed again, interrogatively, and seizing the door of a second-class carriage, he held it open for me, guessing, by what intuition I know not, that I must necessarily be a second-class passenger.

For once, he was mistaken; for, thanks to the kindness of dear Kitty Bute, with whom my vacation had been

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passed, I was first-class all the way from Paris to London, and, rejecting contemptuously the porter's offer of assistance, I sprang into the nearest first-class compartment, just as the train began to move, and found myself alone with the little bride and groom. There was a look of annoyance in the eyes of the bride, while the young man gave a significant pull to his brown mustache, and I knew I was not wanted. But I had a right as valid as their own, and taking my seat on the opposite side, near the open window, I pretended to be occupied with the country through which we were passing so swiftly, while my thoughts went back to the past, gathering up the broken threads of my life, and dwelling upon what I had been once and what I was now.

And this is the picture I saw far back through a vista of twelve long, weary years. A pleasant old house in Middlesex—an English house, of stone, with ivy creeping over it even to the chimney-tops, and the boxes of flowers in the windows, the tall trees in front, the patches of geraniums and petunias in the grass, the honeysuckle over the door of the wide, old-fashioned hall, through which the summer air blew softly, laden with the perfume of roses, and the sweet-scented mignonette. And I was standing in the door, with a half-opened rose in my hair, and the tall, angular boy who had placed it there was looking down upon me with great tears swimming in his eyes, as he said:

"Keep the rose, Norah, till I come back, and I shall know you have not forgotten me, even if you are Mrs. Archibald Browning."

There was an emphasis on the last name, and a tone in his voice as he spoke it, which did not please me, and I said:

"Oh, Tom, why can't you like Archie better, and he so noble and good, and so kind to get you that position with his uncle in India?"

"Yes, I know; Archie is lovely, and I am a brute because I don't feel like kissing his feet just because he interested himself to get me the place. But I hope you will be happy, and if those two lubbers of cousins happen to die, you will be my Lady Cleaver, and mistress of Brierton Lodge; but don't forget old Tom, who by that time will be married to some black East Indian princess, and have lots of little darkies running round. There, I must go now; it's time. I say, Norah, come with me through the field to the highway. I want to keep hold of you to the very last, and Archie won't care. I'm your brother, you know."

He was my brother to all intents and purposes, though really my second cousin. But I had no brother, or sister, or mother, only a father and aunt, and Tom had lived with us since I was a little girl of ten, and now he was going out to India to make his fortune. His ship would sail on the morrow, and I couldn't refuse to go with him as far as the highway, where he was to take the stage for London. It was a forlorn, dreary walk through the pleasant grassy lane; for I loved Tom very dearly, and there was a great wrench in my heart at the thought of parting with him. He was silent, and never spoke a word until the

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stille was reached, where we were to part. Then, suddenly lifting me high in his arms, as if I were a child, for I was very short and he was very tall, he kissed my forehead and lips, and cried like a baby, as he said :

"Good-by, little Norah, Mrs. Archibald Browning, good-by, and God bless you; and if that husband ever does abuse you, tell him he will answer for it to me, Tom Gordon, the gawky cousin with more legs than brains."

"Oh, Tom," I said, struggling to my feet. "you know Archie did not mean that, and maybe he never said it. I wish you did not hate him so."

"I don't hate him, Norah. I simply do not like him or any of his race. They are a proud set, who think you highly honoured to be admitted into the blooded family of Brownings. And then, too, Norah," he continued, with that peculiar smile which was his one beauty and made him irresistible, "then, too, Norah, you see—you know—I'm not your brother; I'm only your second cousin, and though I never thought you very handsome, you are the nicest girl I ever knew, and—well I think I meant to marry you myself!"

He burst into a merry laugh and looked straight in my face as I drew back from him with a gasp, exclaiming :

"You, Tom; you marry me! Why, I'm old enough to be your grandmother!"

"You are twenty, I am nineteen; that's all the difference, though I confess that you have badgered, and scolded, and lectured me enough for forty grandmothers," he said; "but there's the stage, and now it's really good-by."

Two minutes more and I was walking back alone through the quiet shady lane, where Tom and I had played together so often, and where now were the remains of a playhouse he had built under a spreading oak. There was his room, divided from mine by a line of stones, and there in the wall the little niche where I kept my dishes and hid the gooseberry tarts away from greedy Tom. How happy we had been together, making believe sometimes that I was his mother and he my sick baby, which I tried to rock asleep in my lap, finding his long legs a great inconvenience and a serious obstacle to much petting on my part. Again he was a fierce knight and I a lorn maiden shut up in some grim fortress—usually old Dunluce Castle—for we had once visited the north of Ireland and explored the ruins of what some writer terms “the grandest, romantickest, awfulest sea-king’s home in all the broad kingdom.” We had our quarrels, too, and even fights, in which I always came off victor, owing to my peculiar mode of warfare, as I had a habit of springing upon him like a little cat and tearing his face with my nails, while he was usually content with jerky pulls at my hair. But all that was over now, and buried with the doll whose head he had broken because I would not stay at home and nurse him when he had the quinsy, and could only talk in a wheezy kind of way. He had threatened revenge, and taken it upon my prettiest Paris doll, and I had flown at him like a tiger and scratched his nose till it bled, and cried myself sick, and then we had made it up, and buried dolly near the old playhouse in the lane,

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and reared a slab to her memory, and planted some daisies on her grave. And just here, near what seemed to be the grave of my childhood, I sat down that summer afternoon and thought of all those years—of Tom on his way to India, and of the future opening so brightly before me, for I was the betrothed wife of Archibald Browning, who belonged to one of the best families in the county, and in less than a month we were to be married and spend our honeymoon in Switzerland, among the glorious Alps, of which I had dreamed so much. I knew that Archie's mother was very proud, and thought her son might have looked higher than Norah Burton, especially as there was a possible peerage in prospect; but she was civil to me, and had said that a season in London would improve me greatly, if such a little creature could be improved; and Archie, I was sure, loved me dearly, notwithstanding that he sometimes criticised my style and manner, and wished I was more like his cousin, Lady Darinda Cleaver, who, I heard, powdered her face and pencilled her eyebrows, and was the finest rider on Rotten Row. Tom, who had been often in London, had seen the Lady Darinda, and reported her as a perfect giantess, who wore a man's hat with a flappet behind on the waist of her riding suit, and sat her horse as stiffly and straight as if held in her place by a ramrod, and never rode faster than a black ant could trot.

This was Tom's criticism, which I had repeated to Archie, who laughed a little, and pulled his light-brown mustache, and said: "Tom was not a proper judge

of stylish women, and that Darinda's manners were faultless."

I had no doubt they were, though I had never seen her, but I should ere long, as she had consented to be one of my brides-maids, and had written me a note which was very prettily worded, and very patronizing in its tone, and made me dislike her thoroughly. She was in London now, Archie had written in the letter in which he told me that he should be with me on the day after Tom's departure. I was never so glad for his coming, I think, for my heart was very heavy at parting with Tom, whose words, "I meant to marry you myself," kept ringing in my ears as I sat alone in the grassy lane by the ruins of the playhouse he had built. Not that I attached the slightest importance to them, or believed for a moment that he was serious in what he said for he was my brother, my dear, good brother, who had been so much to me, and whom I missed so much, that at last I laid my head upon dollie's miniature grave and cried bitterly for the boy travelling so fast to London, and the ship which would take him away. There was, however, comfort in the thought that Archie was coming on the morrow, and the next morning found me with spirits restored, eager and expectant for my love. But Archie did not come, and the hours wore on and there was no news of him until the following day, when there came a note from his mother, telling me he was sick.

"Nothing very serious," she wrote, "only a heavy cold, the result of a drenching he received while riding with

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Darinda several miles out in the country. He sends his love, and says you are not to be alarmed, for he will soon be with you."

That was the note, and I was not to be alarmed, nor was I. I was only conscious that a strange kind of feeling took possession of me, which I could not define, but which sent me to my room, where the bridal finery lay, and made me fold it up, piece by piece, and put it carefully away, with a feeling that it would never be worn. There was much sickness in our neighbourhood that summer, and the morning after hearing of Archie's illness I took my breakfast in bed, and after that day knew little of what was passing around me until the roses which were blossoming so brightly when Tom went away were fading on their stalks, and other and later flowers were blossoming in their place.

I had been very sick, Aunt Esther said, with the distemper, as they called the disease, which had desolated so many homes in our vicinity.

"What day is this? What day of the month I mean?" I asked, feeling dazed and bewildered, and uncertain whether it was yesterday that I sat in the lane and cried for dear Tom, or whether it was long ago.

"It's the tenth," she said; and her voice shook a little, and she did not turn her face toward me but pretended to be busy with the curtains of the bed.

"The tenth?" I cried. "Tenth of July, my wedding day! Do you mean that?"



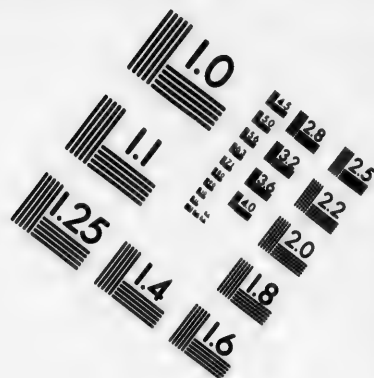
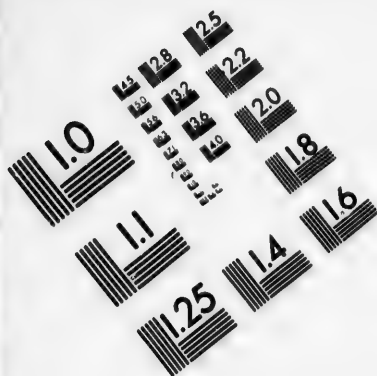
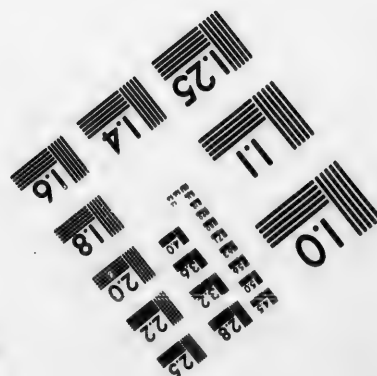
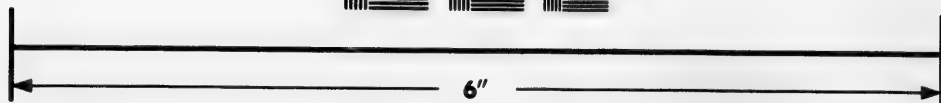
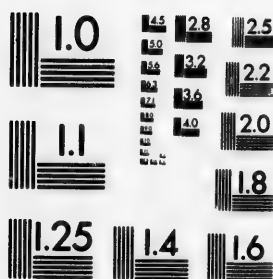


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"Yes," she answered, softly; "it was to have been your wedding-day."

"And Archie," I continued; "is he better—is he here?"

Still her face was turned from mine, and her hands were busy with the curtain, as she replied:

"He is not here now, but he is better, much better."

This time her voice and manner awoke in me a suspicion of some impending evil, and exerting all my strength, I raised myself in bed, and said, vehemently:

"Aunt Esther, you are keeping something from me. Tell me the worst at once. Is Archie dead, or Tom, or both?"

"No, no. Oh, no, not Tom. Heaven forbid that Tom should die. There's a letter for you from him. I'll get it, shall I? You were not to read it till to-day."

She started to leave the room, but I kept her back with my persistent questionings.

"You have not told me all. You are trying to deceive me. Is Archie dead?"

Archie *was* dead and buried ten days ago. The heavy cold taken while riding with Lady Darinda had become congestion of the lungs, and while I lay unconscious of my loss, he had died, and Lady Darinda had written me a note of condolence and sympathy. Mrs. Browning was too much broken down to write, she said, and so on her devolved the painful duty of telling me how quietly and peacefully Archie had died, after an illness of a few days.

"I nursed him myself to the very last, and was the more anxious to do it," she wrote, "because I fancied he

had never quite forgiven me for having refused him, as you probably knew I did two or three years ago, just before he met you at the Trossach's Hotel. I was very fond of Archie, poor fellow, even if I could not marry him, and it nearly broke my heart to see him die. He spoke your name once or twice, but I could not make out exactly what he said, except 'Be kind to her,' and Mrs. Browning wishes me to assure you of her friendship, and good feeling, and desire to serve you if ever in her power to do so. We did not tell Archie you were sick; we thought it better not, and, as he expressed no wish to have you come to him, it was not necessary. I send a lock of his hair, which I cut for you myself, and Mrs. Browning says she thinks the picture you have of him better than any she has ever seen, and she will be very glad if you will loan it to her until she can have some copies of it taken. Please send it at once, as we shall leave London soon for Bath, my aunt's health rendering a change of air and scene imperative.

"Yours, in sorrow and sympathy,

"DARINDA CLEAVER."

As I read this strange epistle, I felt as if turning into stone, and had my life depended upon it I could not have shed a tear for the lover dead and the ruin of all my hopes. Indeed, in looking back upon the past, I do not think I ever *really* cried for Archie, though for weeks and months there was a heavy pain in my heart, a sense of loss and loneliness, and disappointment, but often, as I

felt the hot tears start, there came the recollection that I had not been his first choice, if indeed I were ever his choice at all; that it was probably in a fit of pique he had asked me to be his wife, and this forced the tears down and made me harder, stonier than before. I sent his picture back that very day, and with it my engagement ring, a splendid solitaire, which I reflected with bitterness would some day sparkle on Lady Darinda's finger, and it did. I did not write a word. I could not. I merely sent the ring and the picture, and felt when I gave them to Aunt Esther that my old life was ended and a new one just begun.

"Tom's letter you have not read yet. That may comfort you. I will bring it directly," Aunt Esther said: and in a moment I had it in my hand and was studying the superscription:

"MISS NORAH BURTON,

"The Oaks,

"Middlesex.

"Not to be opened till the wedding-day."

Then for a moment there was a feeling in my throat as if my heart were rising into my mouth, but I forced it down, and breaking the seal, read the letter which was so much like Tom. He had been out to sea three days, and there was a ship in sight by which they hoped to send messages home, so he was trying to write in spite of the fearful condition of his stomach which he described as a kind of raging whirlpool.

"DEAR NORAH," he began, "I am sitting on deck on a coil of rope, and am sicker than a horse. I've thrown up everything I ate for a month before I left England, and everything I expect to eat for a month to come; but I must write a few lines of congratulation to Mrs. Archibald Browning, as you will be when you read this letter. Norah, I hope you will be happy; I do, upon my word, even if I did talk against him and say I meant to marry you myself. This was all bosh, for of course a venerable kind of a girl like you never could think of such a spindle-shanked, sandy-haired gawky as I am. Archie is far better for you, and I am glad you are his wife, real glad, Norah, and no sham, though last night when I sat on the deck and looked out over the dark sea toward old England and you, there was a lump in my throat as big as a tub, and, six-footer as I am, I laid my head on the railing and cried like a baby, and whispered to myself, 'Good-by, Norah, good-by, once for all.' I was bending up double next minute, and that cramp finished the business, and knocked all sentiment out of me, so that to-day you are my sister, or mother, or grandmother, just which you choose to call yourself, and I am very glad you are to marry Archie. I mean to be a rich man, and by and by pick up some English girl in India, and bring her home to you. There it comes again! that horrid creep from the toes up. I wonder if the whale felt that way when he cast up Jonah. Oh, my gracious. I can't stand it. Good-by. Yours in the last agony,

"TOM GORDON."

I had been out in a yacht on the Irish coast, and been sea-sick, and I knew just how Tom felt, and could imagine how he acted, and I laughed aloud in spite of Archie dead and the great pain at my heart. In fact, the laugh did me good, and with Tom's letter under my pillow I felt better than before I read it.

It was four months before we heard from him again, and then he was so sorry for me, so kindly sympathetic that I cried as I had not cried since Archie died. Tom was well and happy, and liked the country and his employment, and to use his words was having a "gay old time," with some "larks of chaps," whose acquaintance he had made. Regularly each month we heard from him for a year or more, and then his letters became very irregular, and were marked with a daring and flippancy I did not like at all. Then followed an interval of silence, and we heard from other sources that Tom Gordon, though still keeping his place and performing his duties to his employer faithfully, was growing fast into a reckless, daring, dissipated man, such as no sister would like her brother to be. I was his sister; he was my brother, I said, and I wrote him a letter of remonstrance and reproof, telling him how disappointed I was in him, and begging him to reform for my sake, and the sake of the old time when we were children together, and he had some respect for goodness and purity. He did not answer that letter. I think it made him angry, and so I could only weep over the wayward boy, and pray earnestly that Heaven would save

him yet, and restore him to us as he used to be before he strayed so far from the paths of virtue.

And so the years went by till I was twenty-five, when suddenly, without a note of warning, my father died, and by some turn in the wheel of fortune, never clear to my woman's vision, Aunt Esther and I were left with a mere pittance not sufficient to supply the necessities even of one of us. Then Tom wrote and offered to come home if I wished it, but I did not. I was a little afraid of him, and something in my reply must have shown him my distrust, for he was evidently hurt and piqued, and did not write again until after Aunt Esther and myself were settled in lodgings in London, and taking care of ourselves. For we came to that at last; came to the back room, upper floor, of a lodging-house in pleasant old Kensington, with the little hall bed-room, scarcely larger than a recess, for our sleeping apartment, and only my piano left me as a reminder of the dear old home in Middlesex, where strangers now are living. And I was a teacher of French and music, and went out every day to give lessons to my pupils, who lived, some of them, near to Abingdon Road, and some of them farther away.

With the next seven years this story has little to do. Aunt Esther died within the first two years, and I was left alone, but stayed always with the Misses Keith, the three dear old ladies who kept the house, and petted me like a child. They were poor themselves, and depended for their living upon what the lodgers paid them, and I was the least profitable to them of all, for my little back

room on the upper floor was the cheapest room they had. Still I think they would have parted with me more unwillingly than with the rich widow and her son who occupied the drawing-room floor, and made them handsome presents every Christmas. I kept their old hearts young, they said, with my music and my songs, and they pitied me so much, knowing what I used to be, and what I am now.

From Tom I heard quite often after Aunt Esther died. He was a better man, rescued from depths of dissipation he knew not how, he wrote, unless it was the memory of the oldtime in Middlesex, and the prayers he was always sure I made for him. It was strange that through all his wildness he had been retained and trusted by his employer, who depended greatly upon him, and made him at last his confidential clerk. This was the turning point, and from that time he went up and up until few young men, it was said, stood higher or were more popular in Calcutta than my cousin Tom. And I was so proud of him: and when I read his letters telling me of his success and the many people whom he knew, and the families where he visited—families whose friends lived in London—I was glad he did not know just how poor I was, and that if even one scholar failed me I must deny myself something in order to meet the necessities of my life. I had never written him the truth with regard to my circumstances. I told him of the Misses Keith, who were kind to me, and of my cosy room which looked into a pleasant garden, and upon the rear of the church which the Duke of Ar-

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gyle occasionally honoured with his presence. I had also mentioned incidentally, that, as I had plenty of leisure, I gave a few lessons in music to the daughters of gentlemen who lived in the vicinity of Abingdon Road. For this deception my conscience had smitten me cruelly, and if asked for a motive, I could not have given one. I merely wished to keep my poverty a secret from Tom, and up to the time when I was a passenger in a first-class carriage from Dover to London I had succeeded in doing so, and though Tom frequently sent me some token of remembrance from India, and, among other things, a real Cashmere shawl, which I could not wear because of the contrast between that and my ordinary dress, he had never sent me money, and so my pride was spared at the expense of a deception on my part.

I had been on a little trip to Paris and Switzerland with one of my pupils, who defrayed all my expenses, and to whom I was indebted for the freest, happiest week I had known since my father's death. But these had come to an end. I had said good-bye to the glorious Alps, good-bye to delightful Paris, good-bye to my pupil, who was to remain abroad with her mother, and here I was at the last stage of my journey, nearing London, whose smoke and spires were visible in the distance. As we flew along like lightning toward the city, there came over me a great dread of taking to the old, monotonous life again—a shrinking from the little back room, third floor, which was dingy and dreary, with the dark paper on the walls, the threadbare carpet, and the paint which

had seen so many years. There was a loathing, too, of my daily fare, always the cheapest I could find—the nut-ton chop, with rolls and eggs, and the Englishwoman's invariable tea. No more French dishes, and soups, and *café au lait* for me. I was not the guest of a party now; I was again the poor music-teacher, going back to my bondage, and for a few moments I rebelled against it with all my strength, and hot, bitter tears forced themselves to my eyes and rolled down my cheeks. Hastily dashing them away, I glanced at the couple opposite, the bride and groom, to see if they were noticing me, but they were not; they were wholly absorbed in themselves, and were talking of Paris and the fine people they had met there, while the bride was wondering if Miss Lucy Elliston, who lived on Grosvenor Square, would really call upon them as she had promised to do. The name, Elliston, was not new to me, for Tom had more than once mentioned a friend of his, Charlie Elliston, whose father lived on Grosvenor Square, but I did not know there was a Lucy, and I became interested when I heard the bride say:

"George, do you remember how long it is since Miss Elliston returned from India?"

George did not, and the bride, whom George called Addie, continued:

"How very stylish she is, and how much she talked of Mr. Gordon. Is it one of *the Gordons* do you suppose?"

George did not know, and the conversation soon changed to another subject, while I began to wonder if it could be

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Tom, of whom Miss Lucy Elliston talked so much. Tom was in India, and Tom was descended directly from *the Gordons*, whose coat of arms could be seen any day in Hyde Park during the season. Did Tom know Miss Lucy Elliston, and was she so very stylish and proud, and had he not in one of his letters mentioned the number of the house on Grosvenor Square? If so, I would walk round, some day, and look at it, I said, just as we shot under cover at Victoria Station, and my journey was at an end!

It seemed as if my one insignificant little box was always destined to be the last found, as it was a long time before I took my seat in the cab and was driven in the direction of No. — Abingdon Road. The October sun, which all the day had poured such a flood of golden light upon the English landscape, had gone down in a bank of clouds, and I remember that there were signs of rain in the chill evening air, and the fog began to creep up around the lamp-posts and the corners of the streets as I rode through the darkness with a feeling of home-sickness at my heart, as I remembered the Alps and Paris, the long vacation free from care, with every want supplied, and then thought of the little back room, third floor, with its dingy furniture. Even the warm welcome I was sure to receive from the Misses Keith, was forgotten in the gloom which weighed upon my spirits, when at last the cab stopped before No.—, which was all ablaze with light, candles in the basement, candles in the dining-room, and gas, it would seem, in the drawing-room floor, which the wealthy widow had left before I went away, but which

evidently had another occupant now. My ring was answered by the youngest Miss Keith, who, I fancied looked a very little disappointed at sight of me and my box.

"You here!" she said; "we didn't expect you till to-morrow night. Not but you are very welcome, but you see—come this way, please, down stairs. Don't go to your room now. It's cold there, and dark. We have let the drawing-room floor very advantageously to a newly-married couple, who have just arrived. She is so pretty." By this time we had reached the little room in the basement, where the Misses Keith took their meals, and sat when the business of the day was over, and where now a cheerful fire was blazing, making me feel more comfortable than I had since I left the Victoria Station in a cab. The elder Miss Keith and her sister were glad to see me, but I thought they looked askance at each other as if I were not, after all, quite welcome, and in a forlorn, wretched state of mind I sat down to warm my cold feet by the fire, wondering if letting the drawing-room floor so advantageously, had quite put me in the background. Evidently it had, for after a few questions as to my journey, I was left alone, while the three ladies flitted back and forth, up stairs and down, busy with the grand dinner to be served in the drawing-room for the new arrivals, Mr. and Mrs. Trevyllan, who were reported as making elaborate toilets for the occasion.

"Married just six weeks and her dress is beautiful," Miss Keith said to me, as she conducted me at last to my room, which she reported as ready for me.

The drawing-room door was open, and as I passed it I could not forbear glancing in at the table, set with the best damask and silver and glass which No.— afforded, and, right before the fire, under the chandelier, stood the bride in full evening dress of light silk, her golden curls falling behind from a pearl comb, and her blue eyes upturned to the husband who stood beside her, to *George*, as I knew in a moment, recognising them at once as my fellow-travellers from Dover, and remembering again what the bride had said of Miss Lucy Elliston and a Mr. Gordon. Strangely enough, too, my thoughts went far back to Archie, and what I might have been had he lived, and there was a swelling at my heart and the tears were in my eyes as I followed Miss Keith to my room, the door of which she threw wide open, and then stood back for me to see and admire.

"Oh-h! what have you done?" I exclaimed, and then in an instant I comprehended the whole, and knew just how the good souls had planned, and undoubtedly denied themselves to give me this surprise and delightful welcome home.

It was not the old dingy apartment at all, but the coziest of rooms, with fresh paint and paper, a new, light ingrain carpet of drab and blue, with chintz covering for the furniture, of the same shade, and pretty muslin curtains looped back from the windows in place of the coarse Nottingham lace which had always been an offence to me. Add to this a bright fire in the grate, and my little round tea-table drawn up before it, with the rolls and

chop, and pot of damson plums, and the tea-kettle boiling merrily, and you have the picture of the room which I stood contemplating, while Miss Keith blew her nose softly, and wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron as she said :

" You see, the girls and me (they always spoke of each other as *girls*, these women of fifty, fifty-five and sixty) the girls and me thought you had been forlorn long enough, and when Mrs. Winters left and was pleased to give us ten pounds extra, and we let the drawing-rooms so quick and well, pay beginning the day it was let, we said we would do something for Miss Norah, and we meant to have the fire made and a nice hot supper ready when you came, but you took us by surprise, and we had to keep you below till we could straighten up. I am glad you like it. There's Mrs. Trevyllan's bell, and I must go."

She left me then and went to the little bride, who I knew did not enjoy her elaborately served dinner in her handsome parlour one-half as much as I enjoyed my simple tea in my rocking-chair before the fire, which whispered and spit so cheerily and cast such pleasant shadows on the wall. All my poverty and loneliness were for the time forgotten in the glamour of these creature comforts, but they returned to a certain extent when, my supper over and the tea-things removed, I sat down to read the few letters which had come for me within the last two weeks and had not been forwarded. Was there one from Tom ? I asked myself, and I was conscious of a feeling of disappointment when I found there was not.

"Tom does not care for me any more," I said, sadly, to myself, as I opened the first letter and read, with a pang, that Mrs. Lambert, on Warwick Crescent, had concluded to employ a governess in the house, and consequently would not need my services as French and music teacher to her three daughters.

This was a great loss to me, and I remember a feeling of cold and almost hunger as I mechanically folded the letter and laid it aside, and as mechanically opened the second, and read that Mrs. Lennox, High Street, Kensington, was going abroad for the winter with her daughters, and would not need me until spring, when she should be glad to employ me again if my time was not fully occupied.

"Fully occupied," I said bitterly. "Small danger of that. I shall starve at this rate," and in a hopeless, despairing kind of way I opened the third and last letter and read that Lady Fairfax, No. —, Grosvenor Square, would like me to call *at once* if I cared for another scholar, as she might wish to put her little daughter Maude under my instruction.

The note was dated more than two weeks back, and the call *at once* was underscored as if the summons admitted no delay.

"Lost that chance, too," I said, as I studied the small delicate handwriting, and wondered where I had seen it before, or a handwriting like it.

I could not tell, but somehow my thoughts went back to that summer twelve years ago, and the breezy hall, with door opened wide, the sweet-scented air, and the

tall, lank boy placing the white rose in my hair and bidding me keep it till he came back.

I had put the rose between the leaves of a heavy book that night, and when, weeks afterward, I found it there, I laid it away in a little Japanese box with a lock of Archie's bright brown hair, cut for me from his dead brow by Lady Darinda's hand, and one of Tom's sandy curls cut by himself with a jack-knife, and given me on one of my birth-days. That was twelve years in the past, and everything was so changed, and I was so tired, so poor and lonely as I recalled it all, and thought first of Archie dead, then of the father dead also, and the money gone, and then of Tom, who had been so much to me once, and who seemed of late to have forgotten me entirely, for I had not heard from him since July, when he wrote, asking for my photograph, and bidding me be sure and send it, as he wished to know how "the little old mother looked after a dozen years."

That was what he called me; "little old mother," the name he gave me long ago when I used to lecture him so soundly and call him a "naughty boy." He had asked me in the letter if I did not want some money, saying, if I did he wished I would tell him so frankly, and it should be forthcoming to any amount. I did not want money from him; he was too much a stranger to me now to admit of that, but I had sent him a photograph, which the Misses Keith had pronounced excellent, but which I thought younger, fairer, and better-looking than the face I knew as mine. Still, such as it was, I sent it to Tom,

and thanked him for offering me money, and said I did not need it, and told him of my projected trip to Switzerland with some friends, and asked him to write to me again, as I was always glad to hear from him. But he had not written me a line, and it was almost four months now since I sent him the photograph.

"He was probably disappointed and disgusted with the picture, and so has ceased to think of or care for me," I said; and notwithstanding my newly-renovated room, which an hour before I had thought so bright and cheerful, I do not remember that I had ever felt so lonely, and wretched, and forsaken, as I did that night, when I sat thinking of Tom and listening to the rain which had commenced to fall heavily, and was beating against the shutters of the room.

How long I sat there I do not know, but the house was perfectly quiet, and the fire was burned out, when at last I undressed myself and crept shivering to bed.

Next morning I awoke with a dull pain in my head and bones, a soreness in my throat, and a disposition to sneeze, all of which, Miss Keith informed me, were symptoms of influenza, which would nevertheless succumb to a bowl of hot boneset tea, a dose of pills, and a blister on the back of my neck. I took the tea, but declined the blister and pills, and was sick in bed for two whole weeks, during which time the Misses Keith were unremitting in their attentions, and the bride, little Mrs. Trevyllan, came to see me several times. She was a kind-hearted, chatty body, disposed to be very familiar and communicative,

and during her first visit to my room told me all about herself, and how she happened to meet *George*, as she always called her husband. Her father was a clergyman in the Church of England, and had a small parish in the north of Ireland, not far from the Giant's Causeway, where she was born. Her mother had belonged to one of the county families in Essex, and so she was by birth a lady, and entitled to attention from the best of the people. George was junior partner in the firm of Trevyllan & Co., near Regent Circus, and would some day be very rich. He was the best fellow in the world, and had been staying at Portrush for a few weeks the previous summer, and seen and fallen in love with her, and carried her off in the very face of an old, *passee* baronet, who wanted her for his wife. Then she spoke of her home looking out on the wild Irish Sea, and of her mother, who, to eke out their slender salary, sometimes received one or two young ladies into the family, and gave them lessons in French and German. Miss Lucy Elliston had been one of these; and on her second visit to me, the little lady entertained me with gossip concerning this lady, whom she evidently admired greatly—"so stylish, and dignified, and pretty," she said, "and so fond of me, even if I am the daughter of a poor clergyman, and she daughter of Colonel Elliston, who served so long in India, and whose son is there now. We always corresponded at intervals after she left Ireland, and I was so delighted to meet her again in Paris. She has been to India herself for a year, it seems, and only came home last spring. I believe she has a lover

out there ; at all events she talked a great deal of a certain Mr. Gordon, who is very rich and magnificent-looking, she said. She did not tell me she had his photograph, but I heard her say to a friend that she would show it to her sometime, though she did not think it did him justice. I would not wonder if I have it in my possession this very minute."

"You!" I exclaimed—"you have Mr. Gordon's photograph! How can that be?"

"I'll tell you," she replied. "I met Miss Elliston shopping at Marshall & Snellgrove's, the other day, and she apologized for not having called upon me as she promised to do when I saw her in Paris. 'She was so busy,' she said, and then she was expecting her brother from India, and she wished I would waive all ceremony and come and see her some day. She gave me her address, and as her card-case was one of those Florentine mosaic things which open in the centre like a book, she dropped several cards upon the floor. I helped her pick them up, and supposed we had them all, but after she was gone, I found, directly under my feet, the picture of a man, who could not have been her brother, for he is sick, and as it was taken in Calcutta, it must have been Mr. Gordon. I shall take it back to her, and am glad of an excuse to call, for you see, George laughs at my admiration for Miss Elliston, and says it is all on one side, that she does not care two straws for me, or she could find time to come and see me, and all that nonsense, which I don't believe; men are so suspicious."

"I'd like to see the photograph," I said, thinking of Tom, and the utter impossibility that he could be Miss Elliston's friend, or that she could think him splendid-looking.

Tall, raw-boned, thin-faced, with sandy hair, brownish-gray eyes, and a few frecks on his nose—that was Tom, as I remembered him; while the picture Mrs. Trevyllan brought me was of a broad-shouldered, broad-chested, dark-haired man, with heavy, curling beard, and piercing, gray eyes, which yet had a most kindly, honest expression as they looked into mine. *No*, Miss Elliston's Mr. Gordon was *not* Tom, and I experienced a feeling of relief as I returned the photograph to Mrs. Trevyllan.

Looking back upon that time, I know that in my inmost heart there was no thought or wish that Tom could ever be more to me than a friend and brother, but I did not want him in that capacity, I was so alone in the world; and though I did not know Miss Elliston personally, I was sure she would separate me entirely from Tom, for there could be no sympathy between a proud, fashionable woman like Miss Lucy Elliston and a poor music-teacher like myself.

The next day Mrs. Trevyllan made her call, and returned quite disappointed, and, as I fancied, a little disgusted. Miss Elliston was very sorry, but too much occupied with a dressmaker to see any one, so Mrs. Trevyllan had left her card and the photograph, and retraced her steps with a feeling that she had taken the trouble for nothing, unless she took into consideration the fact

that she had at least seen the parlours of Miss Elliston's home. Beautiful beyond anything I had ever seen they must have been, if her description of them was to be trusted, and I sighed a little as I listened to her glowing account of the carpets, and curtains, and pictures, and rare works of art, and then glanced at my own humble surroundings and thought how poor I was. Only one pound ten was left in my purse, and there was the doctor's bill and the two weeks' rent, to say nothing of a new pair of boots which I must have, for the old pair leaked, and was past being made respectable by any amount of French dressing. Yes, I was very poor; too poor, in fact, to remain idle much longer, and as soon as I was able I started out in quest of pupils in the place of those I had lost.

Remembering the note of Lady Fairfax, I resolved to seek her first, hoping that she had not engaged another teacher for her little girl, notwithstanding the imperative "Come at once, if you care for another scholar."

How well I remember that November day, when, with a leaden sky overhead, muddy sidewalks under foot, and a feeling of snow or rain in the air, I started, in my suit of last year's gray, which nothing could make new or stylish, but which I did try to freshen a little with clean linen collar and cuffs, and a bright blue necktie in place of the inevitable white one so common then in England. I hunted up, also, an old blue feather, which I twisted among the loops of ribbon on my hat, and felt a little flutter of satisfaction when one of the Misses Keith told me how pretty I looked, and how becoming blue was to

me. It used to be, when I lived in the roomy old house in Middlesex, and Tom said my eyes were like great robin's eggs; but that was years and years ago, and I felt so old and changed as I turned into High street, and went down the stairs to the station, and took my seat in a third-class carriage of the underground railway. I always travelled third-class in London, but so did hundreds of others far richer than myself, and I did not mind that, or think myself inferior to the people around me, but when at last I found myself ringing the bell at Lady Fairfax's handsome house, and met the cool stare of the powdered footman, who opened the door to me, and looked as if he wondered at my presumption in ringing there, I felt all my misgivings return, and was painfully conscious of the faded gray dress, the old feather, and the leaky boots, which were wet even with the short distance it had been necessary for me to walk, and which began to smoke as I involuntarily drew near and held them to the warm coal fire in the grate in the reception room where I was to wait for Lady Fairfax.

She was at home, the tall footman said, and engaged with a lady, but wished me to wait, and I fancied there was a shade of deference in his demeanour toward me after he had taken my card to his mistress and received her message for me. How pleasant it was in that pretty room, with the flowers in the bow window, the soft, rich carpet, the comfortable chairs, the bright fire, which felt so grateful to me after the raw November wind outside. And for a time I enjoyed it all, and listened to the mur-

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mur of voices in the parlour across the hall, where Lady Fairfax was entertaining her visitor. Both were well-bred voices, I thought, and one seemed stronger than the other, as if its owner were a stronger, more self-reliant woman than her companion, and I felt intuitively that I would trust her before the other. Which was Lady Fairfax, and who was her visitor, I wondered, just as a rustling silk trailed down the stairs, and an elderly lady entered the parlour opposite. I heard her address some one as Miss Elliston, and the lower, softer voice responded. Then the stronger voice said: "Oh, Lucy, by the way, when have you heard from your brother, and will he soon be home?"

Instantly then I knew that Lucy Elliston was Lady Fairfax's guest, and I was hoping I might have a glimpse of her as she passed the door on her way out, when a smart waiting-maid entered the room hurriedly, and apparently spoke a few words to Lady Fairfax, who exclaimed:

"Why, Lucy dear, Christine tells me that your mamma has sent word for you to come home immediately. Your brother has just arrived."

"Good gracious!" I heard Miss Elliston say, and wondered a little at the slang from which I supposed her class was free. "Charlie come! Was he alone, Christine? Was no one with him?"

There was a moving of chairs, a shuffling of feet, and in the confusion I lost Christine's reply, but heard distinctly Mr. Gordon's name uttered by some one. Then the three ladies moved into the hall, and through the half-

open door I saw a tall young lady in a maroon velvet street suit, with a long white plume on her hat, and very large black eyes, which shone like diamonds through the lace veil drawn tightly over her face. That was Miss Elliston; and the *very* tall and rather stout woman in heavy black silk, with lavender trimmings, was Lady Fairfax, who pushed the door of the reception-room wide open, and with a firm, decided step crossed to the mantel in front of me, and eying me closely, said :

"You are Miss Burton, I believe?"

"Yes," I replied, and she continued: "Miss Norah Burton, who once lived at the Oaks in Middlesex?"

"Yes," I said again, wondering a little at the question, and how she had ever heard of the Oaks.

She was regarding me very intently, I knew, taking me in from the crumpled blue feather on my hat to the shockingly shabby boots still smoking on the fender. These I involuntarily withdrew, thinking to hide them under my grey dress. She saw the movement, guessed the intention, and said kindly :

"Dry your boots, child. I see they are very wet. Did you walk all the distance from Kensington here?"

"Oh, no," I answered; "only to and from the station, but the streets are very nasty to-day;" and then I looked at her more closely than I had done before.

She was very tall, rather stout, and might have been anywhere from thirty-five to forty; certainly not younger. She had fine eyes, a good complexion, and very large hands, which, nevertheless, were shapely, soft and white,

and loaded with diamonds. One splendid solitaire attracted my attention particularly from its peculiar brilliancy, and the nervous manner in which she kept touching it as she talked to me. She saw I was inspecting her, and allowed me time in which to do it; then she began abruptly, and in a tone slightly fault-finding:

"You received my note, of course, or you would not be here. It was written a month ago, and as I heard nothing from you I naturally supposed you did not care for, or need, another pupil, so I have obtained a governess for Maude."

There was a choking sob in my throat which I forced down as I replied:

"Oh, I am so sorry, for I do need scholars so much, oh, so much."

"Why didn't you come, then?" she asked; and I told her how her letter had been two weeks at my lodgings before my return from the continent, and of the sickness which had followed my return.

"And you live there all alone. Have you no friends, no relations anywhere?" she asked.

"None since father and Aunt Esther died," I said. "I have nobody but Cousin Tom, who is in India, and who never writes to me now. I think he has forgotten me. Yes, I am quite alone."

"I wonder you have never married in all these years," was the next remark, and looking up at her I saw something in her face which went over me like a flash of revelation, and my voice shook a little as I repeated her last

words, "~~Never married!~~" while my thoughts went back to Archie and the summer days when I waited for him, and he did not come, and that later time when Lady Darinda wrote me he was dead.

Was this Lady Darinda? My eyes asked the question, and she answered me: "Perhaps my manner seems strange to you, Miss Burton; let me explain. I was wishing for a new teacher for my little Maude, one who was gentle and patient to children. A friend of mine, Mrs. Barrett, whose daughter you have taught, told me of you. The name attracted me, for I once knew of a Miss Norah Burton. I made inquiries, and learned that Jennie Barrett's teacher and Miss Norah Burton of the Oaks, Middlesex, were one and the same. I wanted to see you, and so I wrote the note."

She spoke rapidly, and kept working at the solitaire, without once looking at me, till I said: "You are Lady Darinda Cleaver?"

Then her large blue eyes looked straight at me and she replied:

"I was Lady Darinda Cleaver, cousin to Archibald Browning, whom you were engaged to marry. If you had married him you would have been Lady Cleaver now of Briarton Lodge, for both my brothers are dead, and Archie was next in succession."

"Lady Cleaver, of Briarton Lodge;" I whispered the words with a gasp, and for a moment tried to realize what was involved in being Lady Cleaver, of Briarton Lodge.

Not a third-floor back room, sure, with shabby boots and mended gloves, and faded dress of gray, but luxury and elegance, and troops of servants and friends, and equality with such people as Lady Fairfax, who, I knew, was trying to imagine how the crumpled, forlorn little woman, with the shabby boots and feather, would have looked as Lady Cleaver of Briarton Lodge. Tom had once taunted me with the possibility of my being Lady Cleaver, and with a thought of him the great bitter throb of regret for what might have been passed away, and I was glad in my heart that I was not the mistress of Briarton Lodge; so, when at last Lady Fairfax said to me, "Are you not sorry?" I looked at her steadily and answered, "Yes, very sorry that Archie is dead, but not sorry that I am not his wife. Years have shown me that we were not suited to each other. We should not have been happy together, and then——" I hesitated a moment, while a feeling of pique, or malice, or jealousy, or whatever one chooses to call a desire to give another a little sting, kept growing within me, until at last I added, "and then—Archie's first choice was for you; he loved you best; offered himself to you first, you know. You wrote me so in the letter."

She turned the solitaire on her finger entirely round, and her cheek flushed as she smiled faintly, and replied:

"Offered himself to me first? Yes, and was very fond of me, I think, but whether he loved me best is doubtful. Poor Archie, he did not want to die, and at the last, after he had ceased to answer our questions, he whispered to

himself; 'Poor little girl; she will be so sorry. Be kind to her.' That was you, I think."

There was a great lump now in my throat, and a faintness came over me which must have shown itself in my face, for Lady Darinda exclaimed:

"How pale you look, Miss Burton, and how tired. I am sure you will be better to take something," and touching the bell she bade the servant who appeared bring some biscuits and a glass of wine. I was not hungry, but I reflected that the lunch would save the expense of supper at home, and I took thankfully the biscuits, and sandwiches, and wine, which were served from solid silver and the most delicate of Sevres. To such straits of calculation had I come: I, who had just missed of being Lady Cleaver, of Briarton Lodge. I pitied myself even while I ate the sandwiches, with Lady Fairfax looking on and fathoming all my poverty, as I believed. Perhaps I did her injustice, for I think she really meant to be kind, and when I had finished my lunch, she said:

"Archie's mother, Aunt Eleanor, is here with me now—lives with me entirely. Would you like to see her?" and before I could reply, she stepped across the hall into the drawing-room, where I heard a few low-spoken words; then another step beside that of Lady Darinda, and Archie's mother, Mrs. Browning, was at my side, and holding my hand in hers.

Time and sorrow had changed her greatly, or else the silvery puffs of hair which shaded her face softened the

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cold, haughty expression I remembered so well, and made it very pleasing and kind.

"Child," she said, "it is many years since we met, and I am sorry to hear so sad a story of you. You are all alone in the world, Darinda tells me."

She had seated herself beside me, still holding my hand, and at the sound of her voice I broke down entirely. All the loneliness, and dreariness and poverty of my life swept over me like a billow of the sea, and forgetting the difference in our stations, I laid my head in her lap and cried bitterly. I think she must have cried, too, a very little, and that for a few moments she lost sight of the poor music teacher in crumpled feather and shabby boots, and saw in me only the girl who had loved her boy, and whom the boy was to have married, if death had not interfered. She was very kind to me, and made me tell all the sad story of my life since father died, and questioned me of Tom, and then, turning to her niece, who had retired to the window, said :

"Darinda, you did not positively engage Mademoiselle Couchet to read to me?"

Her tone implied that she wished her niece to say no, which she accordingly did, while Mrs. Browning continued :

"Then, I think I shall ask Miss Burton if she can come to me for two hours five days in the week, and read to me either in English or French, as I may choose at the time. I will give her a pound a week for the winter. Will you come for that?" and she turned now to me.

"Come between eleven and one, so as to lunch with me in my room."

I had hidden nothing of my needs from her, and I felt sure that she included the lunch for a purpose, and my heart swelled with a gratitude so great that it was positive pain, and kept me from accepting the generous offer for a few moments. I had, indeed, found friends were I least expected them, and when a little later I rose to go, my heart was lighter than it had been since I bade good-by to one favourite pupil in Paris. I was to have a pound a week, with lunch, and what was better yet, Archie's friends were mine at last. I was sure of that, and was not foolish enough to question their motives or to suspect—what was perhaps the truth—that inasmuch as I was in no way connected with them, and they were not at all responsible for my appearance, they could afford to be kind and lend me a helping hand; and then, I might have been the lady of Briarton Lodge, and lived in as grand a house as that of Lady Fairfax or Miss Lucy Elliston. I passed the latter on my way to the station, knowing it by the number which Mrs. Trevyllan had told me, and which I found was the same which Tom had sent me long ago.

The short November day was drawing to a close, and already the gas was lighted in the parlours of No. —, and in the dining-room where the butler was arranging the dinner-table. He had not yet closed the shutters, and I could see the silver, and damask, and flowers, and wondered if they were expecting company beside the son just returned, or were their table surroundings always as ele-

giant and grand. Then I remembered Mr. Gordon, and said: "He is to be there too," just as the figure of a young lady passed before the window of the parlour. It was Miss Elliston, in blue silk evening dress, with white roses in her hair and a soft fall of lace at her throat. She was dressed for dinner, and I stood watching for a moment as she walked up and down two or three times, restlessly as it seemed, and then came to the window and looked out upon the street. Did she see me, I wonder? —the forlorn little woman who hurried away in the fast-gathering darkness. If she did she thought it some maid or shop-girl, no doubt, and continued her watch, while I sped on my way to the station and was soon mounting the stairs which led up and out to High street, Kensington.

It was not far to No — Abingdon road, but a heavy mist was falling, and I was wet, and bedraggled, and cold when at last I reached the house, and finding the door unfastened, walked in without ringing, and hurried directly to my room. From the basement below one of the Misses Keith called to me softly, and thinking it was some inquiry about my supper which she wished to make, I answered back:

"I have had something to eat, and do not wish anything more."

Then I ran on up the next flight of stairs, at the head of which was the door of my room. It was partly open, and a flood of light and warmth streamed out into the hall, causing me to stand perfectly still for a moment,

while my eyes took in the view presented to them. Such a fire as was roaring in the grate had never been seen there since I had been mistress of the apartment, while in the middle of the floor the table was spread as for a gala dinner, with celery and jelly, and even the coffee-urn which I never had used. What did it mean? Why had the Misses Keith taken this liberty with me, and plunged me into such extravagance, when they knew the low state of my finances? I think I felt a little indignant at the good, kind old souls, as I pushed the door wide open and advanced into the room, starting back and stopping suddenly, at sight of a man—a big, broad-shouldered, tall man—muffled in a heavy coat, and sitting with his back to me, his feet resting on a chair, and his hands clasped behind his head, as if he were intently thinking. Who was he that dared thus intrude? I thought, and my voice had a sharp ring in it, as I said:

"Sir, what are you doing here? You have made a mistake. This is my room."

He started then, and sprang up so quickly as to upset the chair on which his feet had rested, and which he did not stop to pick up, as he came rapidly toward me. What a giant of a fellow he was, in that shaggy coat, with all that brown curling beard! and how my heart beat as he caught me in his strong arms, and, kissing me on both cheeks, said:

"I have made no mistake, Norah, and I am here to see you. Don't you remember Spindleshanks?"

Then I knew who it was, and with a glad cry, exclaimed :

"Oh, Tom! Tom! I am so glad. Why didn't you come before, when I wanted you so much?"

I had struggled to my feet, but did not try to release myself from the arm which held me so fast. In my excitement and surprise I forgot the years since we had met, forgot that he was a full-grown man, and no longer the "Spindleshanks," as I used sometimes to call him—forgot everything but the fact that he had come back to me again, and that I was no longer alone and friendless in the world. Tom was there with me, a tower of strength, and I did not hesitate to lean upon my tower at once, and when he said, as only Tom could say, in a half-pitiful, half-laughing tone, "Have it out, Norah. Put your head down here, and cry," I laid my head on his big overcoat, and "cried it out."

I think he must have cried, too, for, as soon as his hands were at liberty, he made vigorous use of his pocket-handkerchief, and I noticed a redness about his eyes, when at last I ventured to look him fully in the face. How changed he was from the long, lank, thin-faced, sandy-haired Tom of old! Broad-shouldered, broad-chested, brown-faced, brown-haired, and brown-bearded, there was scarcely a vestige left of the boy I used to know, except the bright smile, the white, even teeth, and the eyes, which were so kind and honest in their expression, and which, in their turn, looked so searchingly at me. I had divested myself of my hat and sacque by this

time, and came back to the fire, when, turning the gas-jets to their full height, Tom made me stand directly under the chandelier, while he scanned me so closely that I felt the hot blood mounting to my hair, and knew my cheeks were scarlet.

"How changed and old he must think me," I said to myself, just as he asked :

"I say, Mousey, how have you managed to do it ?"

"Do what ?" I asked, and he continued :

"Managed to keep so young, and fair, and pretty, or rather, to grow so pretty, for you are ten times handsomer than you were that day you walked down the lane with me twelve years ago, and I said good-bye, with such a lump in my throat."

"Oh, Tom, how can you——" I began, when he stopped me short and continued :

"Hear me first, and then put in as many disclaimers as you choose. I wan't to tell you at once all it concerns you now to know of my life in India. Those first years I was there I fell in with bad associates, and came near going to the dogs, as you know, and nothing saved me from it, I am sure, but the knowing that a certain little English girl was praying for me every day, and still keeping faith in me, as she wrote me in her letters. I could not forget the little girl, Norah, and the memory of her and her pathetic, 'You will reform, Tom, for the sake of the dear old times, if for nothing else,' brought me back when my feet were slipping over the brink of ruin, and made a man of me once more. I do not know why Mr. Rand

trusted me and kept me through everything, as he did unless it was for certain business qualities which I possessed, and because I did my work well and faithfully. When your father died you know I offered to come home, but you bade me not, and said you did not need me; and so I staid, for money was beginning to pour in upon me, and I grew richer and richer, while you—oh, Norah, I never dreamed to what you were reduced, or nothing would have kept me away so long. I always thought of you as comfortable and happy, in pleasant lodgings, with a competence from your father. I did not know of music scholars and daily toil to earn your bread. Why didn't you tell me, Norah? Surely I had a right to know—I, your brother Tom!"

He did not wait for me to answer, but went on:

"Six months ago Mr. Rand, my old employer and then partner, died, and for some good or favour he fancied I had done him, he left me £50,000, which, with what I already had, made me a rich man, and then I began to think of home and a little cousin who, I said, must be a dried-up old maid by this time."

At this I winced and tried to draw back from Tom, but he held me fast while his rare smile broke all over his face as he went on:

"I thought I'd like to know just how you did look, and so wrote for your photograph, which, when it came, astonished me, it was so young and pretty and girlish; not in the least old maidish, as I feared it might be——"

"Tom, Tom—are you crazy?" I cried, wrenching my

hands from his. "I'm not pretty; I'm not girlish; I'm not young; and I am an old maid of thirty-two."

"Yes, yes, very true. I know your age to a minute, for didn't we use to compare notes on that point when you brought up your seniority of ten months as a reason why you should domineer over and give me fits. I knew you were thirty-two, but you'd pass for twenty-five. Why, I'm ten years older than you now, with my bushy head, and tawny face, and brawny chest. Look at the difference, will you?" And leading me to the mirror, he showed me the picture it reflected—picture of a tall, broad-shouldered, brown-faced, brown-haired man, who might have been thirty five, and by his side, not quite reaching his shoulder, the petite figure of a woman whose forehead and lips were very pale, whose cheeks were very red, whose eyes were bright with excitement, and whose wavy hair was not unbecoming even if it was all tumbled and tossed, and falling about her face and neck.

That was Tom and I, and when, with his mischievous smile shining on me from the glass, he asked: "Well, Mousey, what do you think of us?" I answered, with a dash of my old sauciness: "I think you look like a great shaggy bear, and I like a little cub."

He laughed aloud and said: "You are very complimentary, but I'll forgive you for once, and go on with my story, which was interrupted at the point where I received the photograph, which astonished me so much that I determined to come home and see if it was correct. And, as you know, I came, and, wishing to surprise you, gave

no warning of my coming, but hunted up your lodgings, and felt utterly confounded when I was ushered into this little back third-floor room, and was told you had occupied it for years, and not only that, but that you gave music lessons for a living, and had gone out to hunt up scholars. I don't think I quite swore, but I did tear round a little, and bade the woman make up a roaring fire against your return, and told her I was going to dine with you. You ought to have seen her twist her apron, and heard her stammer and hesitate as she told me, 'Miss Burton didn't mostly have dinners now-a-days;' meaning, of course, that you couldn't afford it. I believe I did say d——, with a dash, under my breath, but I gave her a sovereign, and told her to get up the best dinner possible for the time, for I was hungry as forty bears. She courtesied almost to the floor and departed, but, upon my soul, I believe they think me a burglar or something dreadful, for one or the other of them has been on this floor watching me slyly to see that I was not rummaging your things."

While he talked, I was trying to dry my wet boots, which, like Lady Darinda, he spied at last, and exclaimed, "Why, child, how wet your boots are. Why do you not change them? You will surely take cold. Go now and do it."

I did not tell him they were all I had, but he must have guessed it from my manner, and looking sharply at me as if he would wring the truth from me, he said: "Norah are these your only boots?"

"Yes, Tom, they are," and my lip quivered a little, while he stalked up and down the room, knocking over a chair with his big overcoat, and nearly upsetting a stand of plants. I think I felt my poverty more at that moment than I had ever done before, but there was nothing I could say, and fortunately for us both Miss Keith just then appeared, saying dinner was ready, and asking if she should send up the soup. What a dinner it was, and Tom did ample justice to it, until suddenly, remembering himself, he said :

"By the way, I must be moderate here, for I have another dinner to eat to-night: one, too, where the fatted calf has been killed."

Up to this point I had not once thought of Miss Elliston since I found Tom sitting in my room, but now I remembered the handsome dinner table seen through the windows of No. — Grosvenor Square, and felt sure it was to that table Tom had been bidden as a guest; but I would not ask him, and he continued :

"My fellow-traveller from India was an invalid—that Lieut. Elliston of whom I wrote you once. I nursed him through a contagious disease when every one else had deserted him, and he seems to think he owes his life to me, and sticks to me like a burr; while his family, on the strength of that and the little Gordon blood there is in my veins, make much of me, and insist that I shall dine with them to-night; so I must leave you soon, but shall return to-morrow."

I made no answer, but busied myself with preparing his coffee, and after a moment he went on :

"By the way, Norah, what do you think of Miss Elliston? She wrote you were at the same hotel in Paris."

"At the same hotel with me? Miss Elliston at the Grand? When?" I asked, in much surprise; and he replied :

"Last September, when you were there with friends. Did you not see her?"

"No," I answered, "I did not see her, or if I did, I did not know it; and she is much too proud to make herself known to me, a poor music teacher."

This last I said bitterly, but Tom made no reply, and hardly knowing what I was saying, I added :

"Then you are the Mr. Gordon she talks so much about?"

"Miss Elliston talk about me! How do you know that?" Tom asked, with an increase of colour in his face.

Very foolishly I told him how I knew, and of the photograph which must be his, though it was not quite like him now.

"Yes, it was taken three years ago, and we exchanged. I remember it now—and she has it yet," he said abruptly; then looking steadily at me across the table, he continued : "Norah, I have not told you all the reasons which brought me home. I am thinking of getting married and settling down in England among the daisies and violets."

"Yes, Tom," I said, with a great throb of pain in my

heart, for I knew his marriage with Miss Elliston would separate him from me further than his absence in India had done.

"Are you not glad?" he added, and there was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, and a lurking smile at the corners of his mouth.

Then I told a fib, and said I was glad, for I could sometime hope to see him. My life would not be so lonely.

He had risen by this time, and was putting on his overcoat, which made him so big and bearish.

"Good-bye, Mousey, till to-morrow. Take off those boots and dry your feet the instant I am gone. I cannot have you sick now. *Au revoir.*"

He passed his warm hands caressingly over my hair and across my cheek, and then he was gone, and I sat down alone to think it all over, and wonder if it really was Tom who had been there, or if it was a dream from which I should awaken. Naturally too, I followed him in imagination to the dinner, and saw Miss Lucy in her blue silk with white roses in her hair, and to my very finger tips I felt how Tom must be impressed with the difference between her high-bred grace and ease of manner, and the little shrinking woman in faded gray, with worn-out, leaky boots. I did not take them off, but held them to the fire and watched the steam as it came from the soles, and rather enjoyed my poverty and loneliness, and thought hard things against Miss Elliston, who had known I was at the hotel and had never spoken to me.

I must have fallen asleep while I thought, and the fire

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was out, and the clock striking twelve when I awoke, chilled in every limb, with a dull, heavy pain in the back of my head, and a soreness in my throat. I remember going to the window and looking out into the foggy night, and wondering if the grand dinner was over, and how soon Tom would come again. Then I crept shivering to bed, and when I awoke the Misses Keith were all in my room, together with Mrs. Trevyllan, and I heard them say :

"Twelve pairs of boots for her to try, with orders to keep them all if they fit. He is very generous."

Then I knew that somebody had sent me a box of beautiful French gaiters, and it made me so tired to think of wearing them all at once, as I thought I must, that I gave a weary sigh, which brought the ladies instantly to my side with anxious inquiries as to how I felt, and where I was the sickest.

"Not sick at all," I said, "only tired, and cold, and sleepy. Please go away with the dinners, and boots, and Toms, and leave me alone. I want to sleep it out."

"Poor girl, she's out of her head," I heard one of them say, and then I slept again, how long I do not know, but when I awoke a curious thing seemed to have happened, which yet did not surprise me in the least.

I, Norah Burton, was hidden away in the deep window seat, where, myself unseen, I could command a view of the bed, which had been brought from the little recess, and now occupied the centre of my room. On that bed, with a face as white as the pillows, save where the fever

spot burned on either cheek, somebody was lying—somebody who looked like me, and yet was not I, though they called her Norah, and talked in whispers about the long strain upon her nerves, being so much alone; the long walk in the November mist and fog before she was able, and the repeated wetting of her feet from the want of strong, new shoes. How queerly it all sounded; how curiously I watched the girl, who looked so young, lying there so still, with her hands folded always the same way, just over her breast, and her face turned a little toward me.

If she had ever been restless, and, from what they said, I judged she must have been, it was over now, and she lay like one dead, never moving so much as an eyelid, or paying the slightest heed to what was passing around her. The Misses Keith and Mrs. Trevyllan were never all together in the chamber now, though each came frequently, and Mrs. Trevyllan always cried out and asked, "Do you think she is any better? Will she live?" of the tall man who sat and watched the sick girl just as closely as I did, and who would sometimes answer, "God knows," and again shake his head mournfully, as if there was no hope.

How kind, and tender, and gentle he was—gentle, and tender, and kind as any woman—and I found myself wishing the girl could know he was there, and know how, when he was all alone, he kissed the pale little fingers, and smoothed the ruffled hair, and called so soft and low. "Norah, Norah! don't you hear me? Don't you know old Tom?"

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She did not hear; she did not know; and the pale fingers never stirred to the kiss he gave them, and only the breath from the parted lips told there still was life. How sorry I felt for them both, sorriest I think, for the man, who seldom left the room, and sat always where he could see the white face on the pillow.

"Dear little face! dear little girl! I cannot let her die. Please, God, spare her to me!" I heard him say once. Then there certainly was a fluttering of the eyelids—an effort like struggling back to life; and I think the girl in the bed wanted to tell the man in the chair that she heard him, and appreciated all his watchful care.

But nature was too weak to rally, and after that one sign the sick girl lay quiet and motionless as ever, and only the ticking of the clock broke the deep silence of the room. I wondered did the ticking disturb her. It would have worried me, and I should have been forever repeating the monotonous one-two, one-two, which the pendulum seemed to be saying. Did my thought communicate itself to her the girl on my pillow, with a face like my face, and which yet was not mine? Perhaps, for she did at last move uneasily, and the pale lips whispered; "One-two, one-two! it keeps going on forever and ever and makes me so tired. Stop it, Tom."

He knew what she meant, and the clock which had not run down in years was silenced at once, while Tom's face grew bright and hopeful, for she had spoken, and called him by name.

Outside there was the sound of carriage wheels stopping

before the door—a pull at the bell, a hurried conversation in the hall below, Miss Keith's voice sounding flurried and confused, the other voice self-assured, surprised, and commanding; and then footsteps came up the stairs, and Archie's mother, Mrs. Browning, was standing on the threshold, red, tired, panting, and taking in rapidly every portion of the room, from the cheap hearthrug and carpet to the tall man by the bedside, and the pallid face on the pillows. At sight of that, her countenance changed sensibly, and she exclaimed:

"I did not suppose it so bad as this."

Then Tom, who had arisen from his seat, spoke a little sternly, for he was angry at the intrusion:

"Madam, don't you know Miss Burton is very sick and cannot see strangers?"

"Yes, I know;" and Archie's mother pressed close to the girl on the pillow, trailing her India shawl on the floor directly across Tom's feet. "She was engaged to read to me every day for two hours, and I waited for her to come or send some message, till at last I concluded to drive round and see what had become of her. You are her cousin, I believe? I am Mrs. Browning."

She said the last name as if between Mrs. Browning and the cousin there was a vast difference, but if Tom recognised it, he did not seem to notice it; he merely said:

"Yes, I am her cousin, and you were to have been her mother-in-law?"

"Yes, Archie was my son. If he had lived he would

have been heir of Briarton Lodge ; both the young lords are dead."

" Oh, yes, and my cousin would have been Lady Cleaver of Briarton Lodge," Tom answered, and it seemed to me that he thought just as I did, namely, that the sick girl was of more importance to Mrs. Browning because of what she *might have been*.

The shadow of the honour she had missed reached even to this humble room, and made Mrs. Browning more gracious, more pitiful, more anxious than she might otherwise have been. And yet it was wholly the fault of her birth and education that she cared so much for these things. At heart she was a thoroughly good woman, and there was genuine kindness in her inquiries of Tom as to what was needed most, and in her deportment toward the sick girl, whom she tried to rouse, calling her by name, and saying to her :

" I am Archie's mother ; you remember Archie, who died ? "

There was a little sob in the mother's voice, but the girl gave no sign ; only Tom looked gloomy, and black, and intensely relieved when the India shawl was trailed down the stairs, and the Browning carriage drove away. Next day it stopped again before the house, and this time it held an added weight of dignity in the person of Lady Darinda Fairfax, whose heavy silk rustled up the stairs, and whose large white hands were constantly rubbing each other as she talked to Tom, in whom she had recognised

the Mr. Gordon seen once at Miss Elliston's, where she was calling at the same time with himself.

"Really, Mr. Gordon, this *is* a surprise. I had no idea, I am sure, that Miss Burton was your cousin; really, I am surprised. And she came near being *my* cousin, too. You must know about Archie?"

"Yes," and Tom bowed stiffly. "I had the honour of seeing him years ago when he visited my cousin. I went out to India just before he died."

"Yes, I see; and did not return until a few days since. It must have shocked you very much—the change in her circumstances. Poor girl, we never knew it until she came to us for employment. I am glad for her, that you have come to care for her. She will live with you, of course, if you marry and settle here."

Lady Darinda, though esteeming herself highly bred, was much given to direct questioning which sometimes seemed impertinent. But Tom did not resent it in this case; he merely replied:

"My cousin will live with me when I am married, and I am happy to say she has no further need to look for employment of any kind. I shall take care of her."

Lady Darinda was so glad. Nor was it a sham gladness. The intimate friend of Miss Lucy Elliston, she had heard much of "the Mr. Gordon who had saved Charlie's life, and who was of the Gordon stock, and a thorough gentleman." She had also felt a kindly interest in the girl who had *almost* been Lady Cleaver, and that interest was increased when she knew her to be a near connection

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of Miss Elliston's Mr. Gordon. The time might come when it would do to speak of her and possibly present her to her friends, and she made many anxious inquiries concerning her, and talked so rapidly and so loud that the head on the pillow moved as if disturbed, and Tom was glad when the lady at last gathered herself up to leave. She was still nervously rubbing her jewelled hands, and Tom's attention was attracted to a solitaire of great brilliancy, the same I had observed the day I sat in her reception room, and she stood talking to me and rubbing her hands just as she was rubbing them now. Suddenly, and as if her mind was made up, she drew off the ring, and bending over the sick girl pushed it upon the fourth finger of the left hand, saying to Tom as she did so :

"The ring is hers, and she ought never to have parted with it. I don't know why she sent it back to us, but she did, just after Archie died, and as his cousin I kept it, but wish her to have it again, and I fancy she is too proud to take it if she knew. I must go, now, but will come again soon, or send to inquire. Shall I see you at Miss Elliston's to-night at the musicale? Lucy will be greatly disappointed, if you do not come."

"I shall not leave my cousin while she is so sick," was Tom's reply, and with a loud-spoken good-by, Lady Darinda left the little room which she had seemed to fill so full with her large, tall person and voluminous skirts.

Scarcely was she gone, when Tom took in his own the pale little hand where the solitaire was sparkling, looked at it a moment, then gently withdrew it; put it in his

pocket-book, with a muttered something I could not quite understand. Then the girl on the pillow began to grow restless, and her fever came on, and Tom said there had been too much talking in the room, and no one must be admitted except the Misses Keith and Mrs. Trevyllan, and across the window they hung a heavy curtain to exclude the light, and so to me everything became a blank, and I knew no more of what was passing until one bright December morning, when I awoke suddenly to find myself in the bed where the sick girl had lain.

I was very weak and languid, and very much bewildered as I tried to recall the past, and remember what had happened. It was something like the awakening after Archie died, only, in place of dear old Aunt Esther, here was a tall, brown man looking down upon me, with so much kindness and anxiety in his eyes, that without knowing at all who he was, I tried to put out my hand as I said: "You are very, very good. I'll tell Tom about it."

"Norah, Norah. I am Tom. Don't you know me?" and his great warm hands were laid on mine as he bent over me with his eager questioning. "Don't you know me, Norah? I am Tom." I did know him then, and I said:

"Yes, I know you, and I've been very sick; it must have been the leaky boots which kept my feet so cold and wet. Where are they, Tom?"

"Burned up, Norah. I did it myself in the kitchen range, and have in their place twelve pairs of the neatest

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little gaiters you ever saw, waiting for your feet to be able to wear them. Shall I show them to you now?"

He did not wait for me to answer, but darted into the recess adjoining, and bringing out the boots, tumbled them all upon the bed where I could see them. Twelve pairs of boots, of every style and make! Walking boots, morning boots, calling boots, prunella boots, bronze boots, Frenchcalf-skin boots, and what was very strange, a dainty pair of white satin boots, which laced so very high, and were so pretty to look at. I think these pleased me more than all the others, though I had no idea as to when or where I could wear them.

A handsome boot was one of my weaknesses, and lo! here were a dozen pairs of them, and I laughed as a child would have done over a box of toys. He let me enjoy them a few moments, and then took them away, telling me I was not to get too tired, and how glad he was that I was better, and able to recognise him. I had been sick three weeks, he said, and he had been with me all the time, except when he went out for a short time each day.

"You have been out of your head," he said, "and insisted that you were sitting over in the window, and that somebody else was here in bed, and that I was a big bear. What do you think of me, now?"

I looked at him closely, and saw that the heavy overcoat and coarse sea clothes had given place to garments of the most fashionable kind, which fitted him admirably, and gave him quite a *distingué* air, while his hair and

beard were cut and trimmed after the most approved style of Hyde Park and Rotten Row at the height of the season. He was a man to be noticed anywhere, and after inspecting him a moment, I said :

"I think you are very nice, and very handsome, and I am so glad you have come home."

This was great deal to say at once in my feeble state, and he saw how tired I was, and bade me not talk any more, and drew the covering about me and tucked it in, and brought me a clean handkerchief, and laid it on my pillow, and did it all as deftly and handily as any woman could have done.

Oh, those first days of getting better, how happy they were, and how delightful it seemed to be made much of, and petted, and waited on as if I were a princess.

Archie's mother called two or three times, and was very kind to me, and said once, as she was leaving :

"You will hardly come to me now as we had agreed upon."

"Oh, yes I shall," I replied. "I must get to work again as soon as I am able."

Then Tom came forward and said in a quiet, decided way, as if he had a right :

"My cousin will not go out any more. She is under my care now."

That was so like Tom; and I let him have his way with Mrs. Browning, but was nevertheless just as firm in my determination to care for myself. I had not forgotten what he had said about being married, nor had I any

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doubt that he meant to marry Miss Elliston, and if so, our lives must necessarily drift very far apart. But it was so nice to have him all to myself just now, and I enjoyed it to the full, and let him wait on me as much as he liked, and took gladly what he brought me, rare flowers and hot-house plants, and books of engravings for me to look at, and books which he read aloud to me while I lay on my pillows, or sat in my great arm-chair and watched him as he read, and wondered at, and rejoiced over, and felt glad and proud of the change in his appearance. I think he was, without exception, the finest-looking man I ever saw, and Mrs. Trevyllan quite agreed with me, always excepting, of course, her George. She was with me a great deal during my convalescence, and one morning, when Tom was out, she came with a radiant face, which I knew portended some good news. Miss Elliston had actually called—that is, she had come to the door in her carriage, sent in her card, and with it an invitation to a large party to be held next week.

“And are you going?” I asked; and she replied:

“Certainly I am. I think it was real snipping in her not to call herself, but then I can excuse something on the score of old acquaintance, and I must wear that lovely silk before it gets quite out of fashion. She wrote me a little note, saying it was to be a grand affair—quite a crash. I can hardly wait to see it.”

Just then Tom came in, and the conversation ceased, though I was tempted to tell him I knew of the party. He was going, of course, and I felt a little hurt that he

did not speak to me about it; he might have done as much as that, I thought. But he did not until the very day, when he said to me, late in the afternoon:

"I have an engagement for to-night, Mousey. Miss Elliston gives a large party, and as she has deferred it until I could be present, I think I ought to go."

"Yes, certainly by all means," I said; and then, when he was gone, I was silly enough to cry, and to think hard things of Miss Elliston, who was so rich and happy in everything.

When Mrs. Trevyllan was dressed she came to let me look at her, and I thought I had never seen anything as lovely as she was, in pink silk, and lace, and pearls, with her sunny blue eyes and golden hair.

"You will be the belle of the party," I said; but she shook her head, laughingly, and replied:

"I'll tell you to-morrow."

Alas! when the morrow came, the little lady's plumes were drooping, and her spirits a good deal ruffled. Tom was late in his visit that morning, and so she had ample time to tell me all about it.

"Such a jam!" she said; "and it had taken half an hour for the carriage to get up to the house, then another half-hour to push her way to the dressing-room and down again to the drawing-room, where Miss Elliston just touched her hand and said good-evening; and then she was shoved on to a corner, where she and George stood, entirely surrounded by strangers, and feeling more alone than if they had been in the desert. When the dancing

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commenced it was better, for the parlours thinned out and she was able to walk about a little; but nobody spoke to her or noticed her in any way, and she was not introduced to a single individual, until the lion of the evening, the man who received so much attention from everybody, accidentally stumbled upon her, and was so kind and good. And who do you suppose it was? I was never more astonished in my life. And they say he is to marry Miss Elliston. It is quite a settled thing, I heard. Your cousin, Mr. Gordon; and that was his photograph, though not very natural; at least, I did not recognise him from it. Perhaps, because I never thought of such a thing."

"The picture was taken three or four years ago," I said; "and Tom says it was never a good one."

"Then you did know all the time that he was Miss Elliston's Mr. Gordon, and you never told me?" Mrs. Trevyllan cried, in a slightly aggrieved tone of voice.

"I knew he was her brother's friend," I said, "but not till after he came home. Is she so very handsome?"

"Why, yes, I think she is, or at least she has a style and high-bred air better than mere beauty. Last night she was all in white, with blush roses on her dress, and in her hair, and when she walked or danced with Mr. Gordon, everybody remarked what a splendid couple they were, she so tall and graceful, and he so big and princelike. Did you know they were engaged?"

She put the question direct, and I knew my cheeks were scarlet, as I replied:

"I supposed—yes. I—Tom told me he came home to be married; that's all I know."

I was taking my breakfast, and my hand shook so that I spilled my chocolate over the clean napkin and dropped my egg-spoon into my lap.

There was an interval of silence, and then the impulsive little lady burst out:

"I say, Miss Burton, it's too bad. Here I'd been building a castle for you, and behold, Lucy Elliston is to be its mistress. I don't like her as well as I did, I'm free to say, for I do not think she treated me as she should at the party; never introducing me to a person, or even speaking to me till just as I was leaving, when she was so glad I came, and hoped I had not found it very dull among so many strangers; and then, Miss Burton—I despise a tale-bearer—but I will tell you what I heard. I was standing by myself in a little window alcove, and Lucy came along with a tall, large woman, whom I think she called Lady Fairfax. They did not see me, and after the conversation commenced I dared not show myself, so I kept still and heard them talk of you."

"Of me?" I exclaimed; and she continued:

"Of you; yes. Lady Fairfax said:

"What a splendid fellow he is, and how he wins the people. I almost envy you, Lucy, if you do marry him. By the way, do you know his cousin, Miss Burton? Was she invited to-night?"

"No," Lucy said. "I've never called upon her. She teaches music, you know. I saw her in Paris, with one

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of her pupils; rather pretty, but no style. You never saw her, of course !'

" 'Yes, I have ;' and I fancied Lady Fairfax spoke a little hotly. 'I know all about her, and she is as nice as she can be, and a lady too. She was to have married Cousin Archie, who died, and if she had she would have been Lady Cleaver, of Briarton Lodge, now. She has been very sick ; did you know that ?'

" 'Yes, I should think so, for that has kept Mr. Gordon from us so much, and Charlie was so vexed, for he needed amusing himself. I trust she will soon be well. Is she really nice and a lady ?'

" 'Yes, every whit a lady, and I advise you to cultivate her at once.'

" 'From where I sat I could see Miss Elliston distinctly, and saw her give a little shrug which she picked up abroad, and which always irritates me. Lady Fairfax must have understood its meaning, for she went on :

" 'Mr. Gordon is evidently very fond of his cousin, and looks upon her as a sister, and——'

" 'How do you know that ? How do you know he is very fond of her ?' Miss Elliston asked, quickly ; and I saw in a moment she was jealous of you. And when Lady Fairfax told of her call when you were sick, and of his devotion to you, and added, 'He will undoubtedly expect her to live with you when you are married,' she gave another shoulder shrug and said :

" '*Cela depend.* I have not married him yet, and, if I

should, I do not propose marrying his entire family. This girl is not of the Gordon blood.'

"What more they would have said I do not know, for just then some dancers came out to cool themselves, and behind them Mr. Gordon, looking for Lucy, who took his arm with such a sweet smile and air of possession, and I heard her say to him:

"Lady Fairfax has been telling me such nice things about your cousin. I wish you would bring her to see me; I am so busy and have so many engagements, I think she might waive ceremony with me.'

"What did Tom reply?" I asked, and Mrs. Trevyllan said:

"I did not hear his answer; but, mark my words, she'll make a fool of him, and he will be asking you to call on her. But don't you do it, and don't you live with them either."

"I never shall," was my answer; and as Tom's step was heard in the hall just then, Mrs. Trevyllan left me to receive his visit alone.

He looked tired and ennuied, and was absent-minded and moody for him, while I, too, was very reticent; and never once mentioned the party until he said:

"I met Mrs. Trevyllan as I came up. She told you about the party last night, I suppose."

"Yes," I answered, and he continued:

"What did she say of Miss Elliston? They are old friends, I believe."

"Yes: they knew each other in Ireland. She said

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she was very pretty and stylish, and so lovely last night in white, with blush roses——”

“Yes,” Tom replied, evidently wishing to hear something more.

“And she said everybody was talking of you, and what a fine-looking couple you were.”

“Yes,” and this time the yes ran out rather sharply, but brought no response from me.

I had told him all I had to tell him of Miss Elliston, and, after waiting a few moments, he began himself :

“Miss Elliston is a very handsome girl, with fine manners and style. She is considered a great catch, I believe. Would you like to see her—that is, enough to call on her with me when you are able? She asked me to bring you, as her time is so fully occupied. Will you go?”

“No, Tom, I’d rather not. I’d do much to please you, but not that. It is her place to call on me, if she cares to know me.”

I said this faintly, and with tears gathering in my eyes, and a horrid feeling of loneliness gathering in my heart.

I was losing Tom sure, and it made me very sad, and made the old life to which I must return seem harder than before. Perhaps it was this, and perhaps it was that I had no vital force with which to rally, no bank to draw from, as the physician said, which kept me an invalid all that winter, with barely strength to walk about my room, and drive occasionally with Tom, who came to see me nearly every day, and who surrounded me with

every possible comfort and luxury, even with the providing me with a maid to wait upon me. I protested against this, knowing how hard it would be to go back to work after so much petting, and said so once to Tom when he was spending the evening with me.

"Go back to your work again! What do you mean?" he asked, and I said:

"Mean just what I say. Take care of myself as soon as I am able, and—and—you are married, as they say you are going to be."

Since the morning after the party he had never mentioned Miss Elliston or referred to her in any way, and his silence was beginning to annoy me, and so I added:

"You are, are you not?"

"Are what?" he asked, with a comical gleam in his eye.

"Are going to be married?" I replied, and he continued:

"Yes, I believe I am, provided the lady will have me. Do you think she will?"

"Have you! Of course she will," I said, quite vehemently, and felt my whole face burn with excitement.

"And if I do marry," Tom added, "why should that compel you to return to your teaching, I'd like to know? Wouldn't you still be my care?"

"No," I answered emphatically. "I shall just take care of myself as I did before you came from India. It will not be any harder."

"I'm not so sure of that," Tom answered, with a laugh,

nor was I so sure of it either, and after he was gone I remember that I cried bitterly over the certainty of his marriage and the change it would bring to me.

During the next three or four weeks I did not see Tom quite as often as usual; he was very busy, he told me; occupied, I supposed, with Miss Elliston, whom I saw with him in the gardens where I was taking an airing in a Eath chair one pleasant morning in April. Mrs. Trevyllan was walking by my side, and first called my attention to them coming straight toward us, and so near that to escape by turning into a by-path was impossible. Tom saw me at the same moment, and I fancied there was a look of annoyance on his face as if the meeting were one he would have avoided. But it was too late now. We were very near each other, and wishing to spare him the necessity of recognition, if possible, I pulled my blue hood closely about my face and pretended to be very much interested in a bed of crocuses; but Tom was not inclined to pass me by, and before I quite knew what I was doing, I had been presented to Miss Elliston, and she was looking at me, and I was looking at her, and each was undoubtedly forming an opinion of the other not altogether complimentary. Mine of her was: Fine-looking, stylish, very stylish, but cold as an ice-berg, selfish, smooth and deep, and if it be true that in the case of every married couple there is one who loves and one who permits it, Tom will be the one who loves, and she the passive recipient. I should as soon think of receiving a caress from an iceberg as from that calm, quiet, self-pos-

sessed woman. Poor Tom, with his warm loving heart, and demonstrative nature! This was my opinion of Miss Elliston, while hers of me, I fancy, was something as follows: "That little dowdy, faded old maid, Mr. Gordon's cousin! and does Lady Fairfax think I'll ever consent to her living with me as a poor relation?"

I thought I read all this in her eyes, which scanned me curiously, while she tried to be agreeable and said she was glad to see me; that she had been coming to call upon me for a long time, but really her time was not her own, and she wished I would come to see her with Mrs. Trevyllan, "who, naughty girl, owes me a party call," she added, playfully, and shaking her finger at the "naughty girl," she made a movement to pass on.

Tom said very little, and I felt he was glad when the interview was over, and I was being trundled along the road further and further from him and his *fiancee*. She was that, I almost knew, and when, three weeks later, he told of a place on Finchley Road, Hampstead, which was for sale, and which he meant to buy, I was sure of it, and asked him when it was to be.

"The wedding, you mean?" and he looked so quizzically at me. "I'd like it as soon as the middle of June. How do you suppose that would suit her?"

I thought he could ascertain that better by asking her rather than me, and I told him so a little pettishly, I am afraid, though he did not seem the least bit ruffled, but held me high in his arms just as he did the night he came from India, and said: "Mousey must manage to get

back some colour in her cheeks, for I want her to look her best at the wedding."

Secretly I hoped I'd be sick, and unable to go, but I did not say so, and when, a few days later, he came and told me he had bought Rose Park, and wished me to drive out and see it, I did not object, but put on my hat and shawl with the feeling as if I were about to visit a grave, instead of the charming spot which Rose Park proved to be. The house stood in an enclosure of two acres, and we went through the grounds first, admiring the beautiful shrubs, the velvety grass, the statuary gleaming so white through the distant trees, the rustic seats and gravel walks, and pretty little fountain which set up such tiny jets of water near the front door. How delightful it all was; just a bit of country in the busy city, from which it was shut out by a high stone wall, over which the English ivy was rioting so luxuriantly. And yet in my heart there was an ache as I thought how very, very seldom I should ever go there, and in imagination saw Miss Elliston's tall, graceful figure, wandering about the shaded walks with Tom, or sitting down to rest in the rose-covered arbour, just as he and I were doing, he asking me innumerable questions about the place, how I liked it, and if I thought his wife would be suited with it.

"Suited!" I cried. "She ought, for I think it a little Paradise. I did not know there was such a pretty place in London, city and country all in one."

"Well, then, Mousey," he said, "if you like the grounds

so much, let us go inside and see what you think of the house, and what, if any, changes you would suggest."

The inside of the house took my breath away, it was so handsome, and yet so cozy and home-like, as if made to live and be happy in. There was nothing stiff about it, nothing too grand to be used every day, and yet it was elegant and rich, and I felt like one in a dream as Tom led me through room after room, some with low windows and balconies, others opening into little conservatories, and all so charming that I could not tell which I liked the best.

"Has Miss Elliston been here? Has she seen it?" I asked, and Tom replied: "Not yet. I wished to bring you here first and see if there was any alteration you could suggest."

"I!" and I looked quickly up at him. "She would not think much of my taste, I fancy. Neither do I think she will care to have a thing changed, it is all so charming, especially her room."

That was indeed the glory of the house, so large and airy, and commanding a fine view of the town outside the garden walls. To the south was a large bay window, fitted up just like a fairy play-house, with pictures and flowers, and lace curtains across the arch, and a canary bird carolling a merry song in his handsome cage. To the west a long balcony, with two or three easy-chairs, and at each corner an urn full of bright flowers and drooping vines. Such a nice place to sit and read, or work in the morning, especially as a door from it communicated

with the sleeping-room, which had the tallest bedstead and bureau I had ever seen, and was pretty enough for the queen herself. Indeed, I doubted whether there was in Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle any rooms as pretty and suggestive of genuine comfort as these, and I said so to Tom as we stood in what he called "my wife's room," with the south bay window and the long west balcony.

"Then you really like it, and think you could be happy here?" Tom said, sitting down upon the blue satin couch and drawing me beside him.

"Happy!" I repeated; "yes, perfectly happy with people whom I loved, and I am sure you'll be happy, Tom, and I'm so glad for you that you have so beautiful a home." He was silent for a moment, and then he said:

"Norah, you have not selected your room yet. I know which I have designed for you, but I want you to be suited. Can you tell me which you would like?"

Now was the time to make an end of all the talk about my living with him at Rose Park, and I began:

"Tom, why can't you understand how impossible it is that I should stay here after you are married?"

"Why impossible?" he asked, and I replied:

"Because there is nothing in common between me and Miss Elliston. She is elegant, and grand and high-born, and I am a little plain old maid of whom she would be ashamed even as a poor relation. She loves you, and you will be happy with her alone. I should only be an element of discord in your household. No, Tom, don't speak

till I'm through. My mind is fully made up. I cannot live with you, and shall resume my old work again and so be independent. But I thank you all the same for your kind offer, and shall be happier in the old life, knowing you are in London, where I can reach you if anything should happen."

I had made my speech, and when it was ended Tom began in a tone of voice I had never heard from him before, except as I remember dimly the time I was so sick and heard him say:

"Dear little girl, please God, spare her to me now."

Sitting in the window, as I fancied I sat then, and watching the man who ministered so tenderly to the sick girl, I had thought there was love in his voice and manner, but when the cobwebs of delirium cleared away the past seemed very vague and misty, and sometimes I doubted if I had seen or heard anything, or if Tom's lips had touched mine more than once as a brother's lips never touch those of a sister. Now, however, there could be no mistaking his voice, or the fact that he had wound his arm around my waist and drawn me nearer to him.

"Norah," he began, "do you remember that summer afternoon years ago, when you walked with me down the lane, and said good-by at the stile when the stage stopped to take me up? Yes, you remember it, and how the boy cried, and the wild words he spoke about having meant you for his wife—you, who were ten months his senior, and felt yourself to be his grandmother. Norah, I was in earnest, then, and there was such a pain in my heart

as I watched you standing on the stile and waving your hand to me, and to myself I said: 'Please God if I can't have her, I'll never have anybody.' Then the years went by and changes came, and the boy-love seemed to have died out, though I never saw a fair English face in India that I did not contrast it with yours, and say to myself: 'Norah's is the best, though possibly not so pretty.' I was a man among men. I had money and social position, and more than one mother wanted me for her daughter, and I knew it, and, being human, was flattered by it somewhat, but always remembered you and the summer afternoon when we said good-by at the stile in Middlesex. Then Miss Elliston came to India. It was an honour to be noticed by her, and I was thus honoured, and as the friend of her favourite brother was often at their rooms, and came to know her well. She is very handsome, and though she may be cold and haughty to those whom she considers her inferiors, she is sweet and gracious to her equals, and was the most popular girl in Calcutta. I was much in her society, and liked her better than any girl I knew, and, as was natural, our names came at last to be mentioned together, and I was looked upon as a suitor for her hand; but I never was, Norah—never."

I started then, but the arm around my waist tightened its hold, and he continued:

"I was not a marrying man, I thought, and whenever I did dream of a home and wife, your face came always before me as it looked that day when you watched me going from you. 'It is not like that now,' I said to my-

self. 'Norah must have grown old in these dozen years;' and then I sent for the photograph, which, when it came, astonished me so much by its sweet, pensive beauty and girlish fairness that I changed my mind, and thought I was a marrying man, and that no other face than that of the original could ever satisfy me. So I came home and found you more than I had hoped. I saw at once that you, too, associated me with Miss Elliston, and as a means of winning you I suffered you to be deceived. Miss Elliston is nothing to me—never can be anything to me, even if you now refuse to select your room at Rose Park. Which shall it be, Norah? Will you take the pretty suite you supposed was intended for another, and will you let me be somewhere in the vicinity, say within call, in case you need me?"

It was a novel way of asking me to be his wife, but it was like Tom, and I understood what it meant, and for a moment sat perfectly still, too much overcome to speak. Then, as Tom pressed me for an answer, and said:

"Come, Norah, I am bound to marry somebody, so which shall it be, Miss Elliston or you?" I answered.

"I think it had better be I; but oh, Tom, I never dreamed of such a thing," and then, of course, I cried, and Tom soothed and quieted me in the usual way, and we sat and talked it over, and I found that I must have loved him all my life, and he was certain he had loved me since the first day of his arrival at the old house in Middlesex, when he chased me with an apple-tree worm, which he

succeeded in dropping into my neck, and for which I rewarded him with a long scratch on his face.

It was settled that we should be married some time in June, and that Archie's mother and Lady Darinda should be invited to the wedding, which otherwise was to be void of guests, with the exception of the Misses Keith and Mrs. Trevyllan. How surprised these last were, and how glad, and how much they made of me as the future Mrs. Gordon. I went and told Lady Fairfax myself, and she insisted upon giving me a wedding, and saying that I should be married from her house in Grosvenor Square. But to that Tom would not listen. A quiet wedding suited him better, with no fuss and worry, and no one to criticise.

Lady Darinda was bitterly disappointed, and was not to be appeased until Tom consented to allow her to give us a party after our return from Switzerland, for we were going there on the bridal trip—going to see the glorious Alps once more, with their ever-changing hues, and the silvery lakes, which sparkle in the sunshine like silver jewels on a bed of green. Oh! that lovely June morning, when the air was filled with the perfume of roses and violets, and not a cloud hung over Kensington. My wedding morning, and it comes back to me so freshly now, with the song of the robin in the tree by my window, the dewy sweetness of the air, the smiles, and tears, and kisses of Mrs. Trevyllan and the Misses Keith, the loud decided talk of Lady Darinda, the quiet "God bless you, child, and make you happy," of Archie's mother when she was

ushered into my room, for both ladies came to the house and went with me to the church on the street just around the corner, where Tom met me, radiant and happy, and so handsome in his new suit "right from Paris," and the old saucy, teasing smile in his eyes and about his mouth, as he looked down upon me and heard me promise to love, honour and obey. There were no tears at my wedding, and I trust no sorry hearts, though Miss Lucy Elliston was there with her brother Charlie, mere lookers-on, and when the ceremony was over, and we were going down the aisle, she confronted Tom laughingly, and said:

"I meant to see you married whether you invited me or not."

To me she was very polite and affable, and I remembered what Tom had said of her sweet graciousness to those whom she thought her equals. I was that now, and she said something about seeing much of me when I returned to England; but she has not, and we shall never be more than mere calling acquaintances, with occasionally a dinner or a lunch.

Lady Darinda gave the promised party, and I wore white satin and pearls, and the white boots Tom bought with the dozen, and Archie's solitaire, too, for Tom told me about it one night at Giessbach, where we spent two delightful weeks, wandering through the woods and up and down the falls to the shores of the lake.

"I did not wish to see it on your finger then," he said, "when you were so sick and I feared you might die; but

now that you have the wedding ring and are absolutely mine, I do not care, and you can wear it if you choose."

I did choose, for I had a weakness for diamonds, and this was a superb one, handsomer even than the one Tom gave me, which chagrined him, I think, a little.

The party was a great success, so far as numbers, and dress, and music, and titled people were concerned; and I was, I believe, considered a success, too, especially after it was generally known that I came near being Lady Cleaver, of Briarton Lodge, and that Tom was one of the Gordons, with heaps of money and the prettiest place in St. John's Wood. For myself, I did not like the party at all, and felt tired, and bored, and glad when it was over and I could come back to the beautiful home where I have been so happy since the day Tom brought me here as his bride.

It is *wife* now. The bridal festivities are all in the past; the bridal dress worn at Lady Darinda's party is yellowed by time, and on the terrace in front of the bow window where I am writing two children are playing—my sweet, blue-eyed Nellie of six, and my brave sturdy boy of four, with light brown hair and a freck on his nose, just where Tom's used to be when he, too, was a boy. We called him Archie, to please the dear old lady, whom I have learned to love so much, and who divides her time about equally between Lady Darinda and myself. The children call her grandma, and I heard Archie explaining to the gardener's son, the other day, that she was really

his grandmother, because she was the mother of his first father.

To me the past seems all a dream, and when I look about me upon my home, and hear the voices of my children shouting on the lawn, and see their father coming up the walk, and know that he will soon be at my side, bending over me in the old, teasing, loving way, I cannot realize that I am she who once plodded so drearily through the London fog and rain, hunting for work with which to get my daily bread. God has been very good to me, and, though I have known much of poverty and sorrow, it is over now, and in all the United Kingdom there is not a happier home than mine, or a happier pair, I am sure, than Tom and I—and so this quiet story of real English life is done.

THE END.

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KITTY CRAIG.

KITTY CRAIG was just married ; and the white satin and fleecy lace, in which she had looked so much like an angel that her great, handsome giant of a husband hardly dared to touch her, was folded and packed away in one of the trunks which stood in the hall waiting the arrival of the express waggon which was to take them to the train. And Kitty in her travelling-dress looked infinitely prettier and more approachable than she had in all that sheen of lace, and satin and flowers, which had cost so much money and discussion, the mother and aunties saying that it was a useless expense, as were nearly all such bridal dresses, when the bride was neither wife nor daughter of a millionaire—that in nine cases out of ten the costly fabric was worn only at the altar and then laid aside to fade and grow yellow with time, or at best to be made over after a lapse of years, when there arose some occasion which demanded it. Kitty, on the contrary, knew she should need it, for was she not going to New York, the very “hub” of parties, and receptions and society, and

though she did not know an individual there, and might, as her quaint old aunt expressed it, be at first, "a rat among cats," instead of "a cat among rats," as she had hitherto been, she should soon have troops of friends, for was not John the confidential clerk in a first-class wholesale house on Broadway, and already acquainted with the wives of his employers, Messrs. Orr, Guile and Steele, and as each of these ladies was in her way a star, would they not be the *sesame* through which Kitty would enter society, and eventually become a *cat*. There was Mrs. Orr, the wife of the senior partner, a handsome matron, who rolled in gold—name, house and person, all golden—and telling of the dollars her husband counted by the millions. John knew her, and had once been invited to dine with her on Sunday, and in his next letter to Kitty had delighted her with a description of the dinner, at which Mrs. Orr presided in satin dress of golden-brown, with diamonds in her ears, and where her daughter, Miss Elinor Orr, wore natural camellias in her hair and talked French to her mother all the time. Then there was Mrs. Guile, a second wife, and a dashing brunette, whose servants did not speak a word of English, and at whose house John had once taken tea on a Sunday night, when his fine baritone voice was wanted in a quartette of music which followed in the evening.

Kitty's fancy was caught with the French servants, the camellias, and the silver service and satin of golden-brown, but the Sunday dining, and tea-drinking, and practising of music shocked her keen sense of right and wrong, and

lowered the Orrs and Guiles a little in her estimation. To her the words, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," meant just that, and nothing less; and not all John's assurances that many good, pious people in New York visited on Sunday, especially in the evening, availed to convince her. Brought up in a New England town, she had imbibed some of the puritanical notions of right and wrong, which, sneer at them as we may, are the bone and sinew of that honesty of purpose and integrity of soul which characterize so many of the New Englanders and stamp them as different from their Western brothers. Kitty could not fellowship Sabbath-breaking, and Mesdames Orr and Guile were looked upon with a shadow of distrust. But she was sure to like the young and beautiful Lottie, the only daughter of Mr. Guile, whose second marriage had been distasteful to the young girl, and hurried her into matrimony with the quiet, staid Amasa Steele, the junior partner of the firm, who was several years her senior. John knew her well, for she often drove to the store for her husband, and while waiting for him amused herself with the confidential clerk, whose young face and fresh ideas were more to her taste than the sober manners and gray hairs of her spouse. Kitty had once seen a note from Lottie to John, a delicate perfumed thing, inviting him to take part in a little musicale she was getting up, and saying so much about his splendid baritone, which she must have, that Kitty had felt a twinge of something like jealousy of the city girl, and was glad when John

wrote to her that Lottie Guile was married that morning and gone on her bridal tour.

That was two years ago, and before John was as able to take a wife as he was now. An increase of salary and a few thousand dollars left him by a considerate old uncle, whose name he bore, made marriage possible, and he and Kitty were married on a lovely June morning, when the air was full of sunshine and sweet odours from the roses and the heliotropes blossoming in the garden beds. And Kitty was very happy, and her heart beat high with joyful anticipations of the future and her life in New York, where she was sure to know people through the Orrs, and Guiles, and Steeles. The firm had sent her a bridal present of a beautiful silver tea-set, and wholly ignorant of the fact that neither of the three ladies representing the firm knew anything of the gift, Kitty felt as if acquainted with them already, and had insisted upon the white satin and scores of things which her mother predicted she would never need. But Kitty knew she should. The white satin was for the possible party which might be given for her by some one of "the firm," and the pretty light silk for calls at home and abroad; and Kitty had it all marked out in her mind just what she should wear on different occasions, and knowing but little of the paraphernalia of a city woman's toilet, was happy accordingly.

They were not to board; John had had enough of that, and felt sick every time he remembered the boarding-house dinners, now done with forever. A pretty little cozy house far up town, in the vicinity of the park was

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to be their home, and John had furnished it with the money left him by his uncle, and in the absence of other feminine advice had ventured to ask Mrs. Lottie to "drive round some day and see if it would do."

There was a slight elevating of Lottie's eyebrows and a look of surprise at the boldness of the young man, and then, thinking within herself, "I have talked with him so much about music that I dare say he thinks he can take liberties," the lady graciously signified her readiness to oblige. But she found it very inconvenient to go the day John fixed upon, very inconvenient, in fact, to go any day, and at last sent her maid, who had "exquisite taste," and who reported "everything perfectly lovely," to John, and "rather plain, but quite good enough" to her mistress.

There was a trip to Niagara Falls, a sail down the St. Lawrence, a few days at the White Mountains, a week of rest in the dear old home among the Berkshire hills, and then, right in the heat of summer, when everybody was out of town, they came one night to the cozy home in Fifty-seventh street, where Susan, the maid of all work, hired in Chicopee, met them with her kindly smile, and the tea-table nicely spread stood waiting to greet them. John's holiday was over, and he went back to his business the next morning the happiest man who rode down town either in stage, or car, or private carriage. He was married and Kitty was his wife, and he felt her kiss upon his lips, and saw her looking after him with those great, sunny blue eyes of hers, and there was a song of joy in

his heart which showed itself upon his face as he entered the counting-room and took his accustomed seat at the desk.

Messrs. Orr and Guile were away doing duty at Saratoga, but Mr. Steele was at home and welcomed the young man warmly, and tried to say some smart thing with regard to the business which had kept him away so long. Then John asked for Lottie, and was told that she was at Newport with a party of friends.

"Confounded bores those watering-places. I can't endure them; and Lottie told me I'd better come home, she could do very well without me," Mr. Steele said in a weary kind of way; and John thought of Kitty and how unwilling he should be to be separated from her now that she was all his own.

In the exuberance of his new happiness and because he pitied the junior partner, who must be so lonely without his wife, he invited him to dine with himself and Kitty, and Mr. Steele accepted the invitation, and was made so welcome by the pretty bride that he went again and again, and by the time autumn hung out her gay attire and Lottie came back to her home it had become a matter of course for him to dine with the Craigs as often as twice a week; and those visits, where he saw for the first time in his life, perhaps, how pleasant a home could be with love upon the hearthstone and in the atmosphere of every room, were influencing him for good and making him a softer, more demonstrative man than he had been hitherto. And when at last Lottie came early in October, he met

her at the train, a very unusual thing for him to do, and kissed her so warmly that she looked at him with surprise, wondering if he had "failed" and was trying to smooth it over to her.

"What is it? Has anything happened?" she asked.

"No, nothing," he answered; and, chilled with his reception, and ashamed of having kissed his wife before everybody, when she did not care two straws for it, he sank back into his old self again, and was as silent and quiet as ever during the drive from the station to his house.

Lottie was very pretty next morning in her becoming dress of drab and scarlet, and Amasa Steele admired her secretly, and thought how handsome she was as over his paper he watched her pouring his coffee, her white hands moving gracefully among the silver, and every motion indicative of fine ladyism and high breeding. It was pleasant to have her home again, and he felt better because she was there, and thought of Kitty and John and their pretty little dining-room, and cleared his throat twice to speak to Lottie about them.

The fact was that Kitty, whose thoughts and feelings were as transparent as noon-day, had made many inquiries of Mr. Steele concerning his wife, and in so doing had shown plainly that she was anticipating a great deal of pleasure from Mrs. Lottie's acquaintance.

"It seems so strange not to know an individual in this great city, when at home I knew everybody, and I shall be glad when Mrs. Steele returns," she had remarked to

him once in reply to something he said, which implied at least that he hoped she and his wife would see a great deal of each other.

And he did hope so, though secretly he felt doubtful with regard to the matter. Still he meant to do his best for the little lady whom he liked so much, and after his coffee was drank and his paper finished, and he had coughed ominously a few times, he began:

"By the way, Lottie, John Craig has brought his wife to the city, and they are keeping house up in Fifty seventh street. I've dined with them several times."

"Ah-h!" and Lottie's great black eyes looked across the table wonderingly.

"Yes, and it's a jolly place, too; so home-like and nice, and Kit—Mrs. Craig I mean, is very pretty."

"Indeed!" And Lottie was interested now. "I did not suppose Mr. Craig able to support very much style, but, perhaps, it was the pretty wife which took you there."

"It certainly was *not* style, but rather the absence of it, which pleased me so much," the husband replied. "It is a little nut-shell of a house. You could almost put the whole of it in one of our parlours, and they keep but one servant, a perfect gem, who makes the nicest kind of apple pie and ginger-snaps. I say, Lottie, why don't we ever have such things? They are a thousand times better than those French dishes you get up for dessert."

Lottie smiled derisively, but her voice was very sweet and pleasant as she said:

"I hardly think Celine is accomplished to the extent of apple pie and ginger-snaps."

Amasa felt the rebuke and wondered at his temerity in expecting anything so common from a cook, whose name was Celine, and who sometimes took the title of Madame.

As yet he had made no headway with regard to the call, and so at last he blurted it out, and told Mrs. Lottie plainly that he wished her to call on Mrs. Craig and show her some attention.

"She is a lady, every whit," he said, "and pretty, too, and intelligent, and well—yes—she rather expects you to call, and she would like to see a little of New York society, and she don't know a single soul, and it's lonesome for her, and you can show her some attention without hurting you one bit, and I hope you will do it."

He had said a great deal more than he intended saying, for something in Lottie's proud eyes exasperated him, and without waiting for her to answer he left the breakfast-room suddenly, and his wife heard the bang of the street door as it shut behind him.

"Expects me to call and show her some attention! How absurd," she said to herself, as she went back to her room. "She cannot be much accustomed to the usages of society if she supposes I am to call on every clerk who happens to get married. Why, my list is so large now that I am nearly crazy, and I certainly shall not add Mrs. John Craig's name to it. Apple pie and ginger-snaps, and one servant! Poor John! He was a nice kind of a fellow, and ought to have been rich."

And then Lottie fell into a sort of dreaming as to what might have been had John been rich instead of poor. The truth was, Lottie Guile had fancied John Craig better than any man she ever knew, and once, after a long chat with him in the office, where she was waiting for her father, she had tried to make up her mind to encourage the liking he evidently had for her, but fear of what Mrs. Grundy would say if the daughter of Richard Guile should marry her father's clerk prevailed, and when Amasa Steele offered himself and his half-million, she accepted him, and wished he was not quite so gray, and that he looked more like the confidential clerk, who was present at the wedding, and who, she thought, seemed a little sorry.

And John was sorry that one as young and sprightly as Lottie should marry a man so wholly unlike herself as the sober, middle-aged Amasa Steele. He was sorry to have her marry at all, for he had found it very pleasant to chat and laugh and sing with her on the occasions when chance threw her in his way, but further than that he did not care. He had known and loved Kitty Clew ever since she was a child, and he drew her to school on his sled, and he expected one day to make her his wife, so foolish Lottie was mistaken when she thought there was a pang in his heart as he saw her made Mrs. Amasa Steele, and called her by that name. She knew nothing of Kitty Clew, and went on dreaming her little romance and fancying there was one joy less in John Craig's life until he heard he was to be married. There was a shadow on her brow, and she felt somehow as if John had misused and

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deceived her, while to crown all she was expected to call on his wife and make a friend of her. It was a hard case and Lottie felt aggravated, and the first time she met John Craig she was very cool toward him, and never asked for his wife or hinted that she knew there was such a creature in the world. John felt her manner keenly, but did not tell Kitty, who, knowing that Mrs. Steele had returned, began to look daily for the call she so certainly expected. One after another the dresses her aunties had pronounced useless were brought out and worn, and in the prettiest of toilets Kitty waited morning, noon and night for one who never came. Lottie did not call, neither did anyone else except the clergyman to whom Kitty had brought a letter of introduction from her own rector, and who dropped in for a few moments to see his new parishioner.

Accustomed at home to be first in every good work, Kitty asked what she could do, and was told of the mission school, where teachers were always needed, and of the regular sewing society of the church, which met one day in each week. Kitty was pleased with the mission school, and entered heart and soul into the work, and found fast friends among the ragged girls and boys, who looked upon her as a kind of divinity. From the sewing society, however, she shrank at first, dreading to encounter so many strangers; but when she heard what need there was for help, she laid aside her own personal feelings and went week after week, mostly from a sense of duty, and a little, it may be, with a hope, that by some chance she might come to know those with whom she

worshipped Sunday after Sunday, and with whom she had more than once knelt around the chancel on communion days.

And there, in the little sewing-room of St. —'s, she sat, one Thursday morning, as much alone as if around her there were not twenty ladies or more talking socially together, and all unmindful of the stranger in the midst, poor little Kitty, who actually started in surprise when she heard herself addressed by a pleasant-faced, elderly woman, who sat near her, and who seemed herself to be a stranger.

"Can you tell me who that is?" she asked, nodding toward a young and dashing-looking lady, who sat near them talking and laughing merrily, and showing in all she did that she felt herself a privileged character, and could do and say what she pleased.

Kitty, too, had been watching her, and taking notes of the cut of her dress and style of her hair, but she did not know who she was, and she said so to her interlocutor; then, as if the sound of a voice speaking kindly to her upon some other topic than her work had unlocked her pent-up feelings, she continued:

"I do not know any one. I have been here week after week, too, and not a person has spoken to me except about my work."

"Is it possible?—and they call themselves Christians, too," was the reply of the woman, who, having once passed a similar ordeal, knew just how desolate and neglected Kitty felt.

Meantime there was a lull in the conversation of the ladies at the right, and, as Kitty's voice was very clear, her words were distinctly heard by one of the group, at least. Swiftly the proud black eyes scanned Kitty's face and person, and then, as if continuing an interrupted conversation, the lady said, loudly enough for Kitty to hear:

"There is one thing this society needs, and that a committee, whose business it shall be to look after the newcomers—the sensitive ones, who feel slighted if they are not noticed—and introduce them, you know."

"An admirable idea," said her companion. "Suppose we make you that committee."

"No, thank you; that is not in my line. I've no patience with people who think to make the sewing society a stepping-stone to other society. I come from a sense of duty, and think every right-minded person should do the same;" and again the black eyes flashed sideways at poor Kitty, who could hardly restrain her tears, and who would have cried outright had she been alone, with no curious ones around her.

Just then there was a fresh arrival, and the new-comer greeted her of the black eyes with the exclamation:

"Why, Lottie Steele—it's an age since you were here. I thought you had forsaken us."

Kitty did not hear the reply, so great was her astonishment at learning that this woman, who had wounded her so cruelly, was Lottie Steele, the one for whom she had watched so long, and on whose acquaintance and friendship she had counted so much in her utter ignorance of

the city and its customs. Alas, how had her idol fallen and how were all her hopes destroyed ! She had nothing whatever to expect in that quarter—nothing to expect anywhere ; and, with a swelling heart as she remembered the church society at home, where she was what Lottie Steele was here, or, as her dear old auntie expressed it, “ a cat among rats,” she gathered up her work, and bidding good-morning to the pleasant-faced woman at her side, who alone of all the ladies there had spoken familiarly to her, started for home, feeling more desolate and alone than she had thought it possible for any one in the great city of New York, which had once seemed to her like an earthly paradise.

As she left the sewing-room she met the rector of the parish, who said a few friendly words to her and then passed on into the room, where he was immediately accosted by Lottie Steele, who asked him who the lady was he met with at the door.

“ That was Mrs. John Craig, from Rosefield,” he replied. “ She is a stranger in the city, and I wish some of my ladies would take a little pains to be polite to her. Her former clergyman speaks highly of her as a Christian, and a lady of culture and education. She is very regular at church, I see, and her husband is a splendid-looking fellow.”

“ Why, that must be the John Craig in our store,” chimed in Agatha Orr, a pert miss of seventeen. “ Isn’t it, Mrs. Steele ? You ought to know, for you and he used to be so intimate.”

A withering glance from Lottie's eyes silenced Miss Agatha, while Lottie's cheeks were scarlet, and her pulse throbbed faster than its wont. She was not naturally hard and cruel, and given to wounding people unnecessarily. She professed to be a Christian; perhaps she was one. She certainly was very rigid with regard to all the fasts and holy days, and no religious devotee kept Lent, so far as church-going was concerned, more strictly than she did; but she had been reared and trained in the school of fashion and caste until many of her better impulses were warped and deformed, and she sometimes did things thoughtlessly, of which she repented afterward. Bearing the reputation of being exceedingly exclusive, she had no idea of inviting into her charmed circle any who wished to enter, and deemed it her duty to shut and bar the door against all intruders, especially if she felt that the intruder had some claim upon her. So, when she overheard Kitty's complaint, and felt in her heart that not only herself but many of her sisters in the church were sadly remiss in their reception of strangers, she said what she did, in a sudden fit of impatience that any one should expect to make her acquaintance at a sewing society. But she had no idea it was Kitty Craig whom she was lashing so unmercifully, and she would have given considerable for the privilege of recalling her thoughtless words. But it was too late; the mischief was done, and Kitty was gone, and, as is frequently the case when we are conscious of having injured a person in any way, Lottie, after the first pangs of self reproach were over, found herself with a greater aver-

sion than ever to that "nut-shell of a house" which might be put "into her parlour," and Kitty's chances for an acquaintance with Mrs. Amasa Steele were far less than before. "A rat among cats," she certainly was, and she felt it keenly as she walked home, with Lottie's scornful words ringing in her ears and making her heart throb so painfully.

"The sensitive ones, who feel slighted if they are not noticed."

Had it really come to this, that she was thus designated?—she, who at home had been first in everything, and had herself, perhaps, been a little hard on the sensitive ones, not knowing then just how they felt. She knew now, and, once alone in her room, wept bitter tears at the first real slight she had ever received. Then, as she remembered what Lottie had said of duty, she questioned herself closely to see how far her motives in going so regularly to the sewing-rooms had been pure and such as God would approve, and she found, alas! that they would not altogether bear the test applied. Something beside a genuine desire to do good had drawn her thither; a hope that she might by chance make some pleasant acquaintance, had been strong in her heart, and she confessed it, amid a gush of tears, to the Friend who never failed her, and to whom she always took sorrows, whether great or small.

Kitty's religion was not on the surface, a mere routine of form and ceremony. She knew in whom she had believed, and she told Him all about her trouble, with the

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simplicity of a little child, and asked to be forgiven so far as she was wrong, and that toward Lottie Steele she might feel as kindly as before. Kitty's face was very bright after that talk with God, and when John came home at night it was a very pretty and gay little wife which sat at his table and told him she had at last seen Mrs. Steele, and thought her very handsome and very bright. Of the insult, however, she said nothing, and John never dreamed how little cause his wife had for speaking as kindly as she did of the thoughtless lady who had wounded her so sadly.

Kitty did not go to the sewing meeting after that, but worked at home for the poor and needy, and felt far happier alone in her quiet sitting-room, with only her singing-bird for company, than she did when surrounded by ladies whom she did not even know by name. She did not expect Lottie Steele now, and never dreamed how near that unlucky affair at the sewing-room came to bringing about the very thing she had once so greatly desired. For Lottie was disturbed and annoyed at her own rudeness, and wished she could in some way atone, and half made up her mind to call upon Mrs. Craig and make friends with her. But when at dinner-table her husband himself broached the subject, and suggested that she go with him that very evening, her pride took alarm at once.

It was too soon; Kitty would of course think she came to conciliate her, and she would not humble herself like that before the wife of a clerk. So she declined rather crossly, and said she was too tired, and she didn't believe

Mrs. Craig wanted her to call, and she was certain "John" did not care to have her see in what a small way he was living.

Amasa Steele never talked much, and now he only muttered something about being "so thundering proud," and, without a word as to where he was going, left the house soon after dinner; and Lottie saw no more of him until the clock was striking eleven. Then he found her at her prayers, for Lottie never omitted any duty of that kind, and when her husband came home she was kneeling by the bedside with her fanciful dressing-gown sweeping the floor, and trying to ask forgiveness for having wounded Kitty Craig. Amasa had not much faith in Lottie's religion, and without waiting for her devotions to end, he asked "where the deuce his slippers were, that he could never find them?"

This untimely interruption brought Lottie from her knees, feeling indignant and aggrieved, and as if she was persecuted for righteousness' sake, and she would neither tell her husband where his slippers were nor ask him where he had been so long, although she was dying to know, and felt almost sure he had visited the Craigs. She knew he had the next day, for he told her so, and said so much in praise of Kitty that she felt a pang of something like jealousy, and avenged herself by driving to the store that afternoon and talking with the confidential clerk so long that her father at last suggested that she go home, as "women were out of place in a business office."

When she and Kitty met again it was at the altar rail, where they knelt side by side, Lottie's rich velvet cloak brushing against Kitty's plainer cloth, and the glitter of her rings flashing before Kitty's eyes. As they rose and turned away Lottie half bowed a recognition, and felt for the remainder of the day as if she were a very good and forgiving woman, inasmuch as Kitty, in her surprise, had not returned the bow.

New York was very gay that winter, and Lottie had no leisure to spare to such as Kitty Craig, who would in time have been wholly forgotten but for an event which occurred just one year from the day when John first brought Kit'y home as his bride. Then a new little life came into that house; and Lottie, who chanced to be in the city for a few days, was surprised to hear from her husband that he was to stand sponsor for little Frederick Steele, who was to be baptized that afternoon. Would she go and see it?

There was a shrug of Lottie's shoulders and lifting of eyebrows, but she made no reply, except:

"You and the Craigs must be very intimate to warrant their taking such a liberty. Pray where have you seen so much of them?"

Amasa did not tell her how many of his evenings when she was away were spent in that nut-shell of a house, where they had apple pie and ginger-snaps for dessert, or how the sight of the little round-faced boy which John had shown him with so much pride on the occasion of his last visit had raised in his heart a vague dissatisfaction

with the stillness of his grand house, where baby voices were never heard. He himself had suggested Frederic Steele, saying :

"I won't ask you to inflict upon him such a name as Amasa, but my only brother was Fred., and I'd like the little chap called for him."

So the baby was christened "Frederic Steele," and Lottie was there and saw it. She had no fancy for christenings, where the children usually screamed so vigorously, she said, but she did want to see how John looked as a father and how Amasa behaved as sponsor. So she went to the church and mentally criticised Kitty's dress, and the baby's dress and thought her husband very awkward and John very handsome, and drove next day to Tiffany's and selected a silver cup, which was marked "For little Fred.," and sent it to the address of the Craigs, who wondered greatly whence it came, and wondered, too, what they should do with it, inasmuch as Amasa's gift was also a silver cup, gold lined, and looking as if it were the twin of the one which had come no one knew whence, and which Kitty put away as something to be looked at but never used.

And now we must pass over a period of more than eighteen months, and come to a time when, wearied out with gaiety and dissipation, Lottie Steele was almost glad when the days of Lent came and put an end to the parties and receptions which had so engrossed her time, and made her grow pale and thin, with dark rings around her eyes. But she would rest now, or at least lead a different

kind of life, for though she wore her second-best dresses and kept all the fasts and holy-days, and never missed a service, whether on Sunday or week day, she still had a good deal of leisure time for quiet, and kept earlier hours, and hoped to come out at Easter as bright and fresh as the new bonnet which she had in her mind for that occasion. Lent was really beneficial, both to her health and her complexion, she thought, and she kept it religiously, and affected to be greatly shocked when she heard that Kitty Craig had committed the enormity of going to the opera, where a wonderful bird of song was entrancing the people with its melody. Lottie went to elaborate lunches served in darkened rooms, and went to the Philharmonics, and to concerts, and lectures, but avoided the opera as if the plague had been rioting there, and felt that the example of consistency she thus set before her husband was infinitely better than that of sinful, opera-going Kitty Craig.

But Lottie grew tired at last of the same daily routine, and wanted something new, and devised a little *musicale*, which was to be held in her parlours and to be highly exclusive and *recherche*. Only the *creme-de-la-creme* were to be there, and these by invitation—said invitation to be in the form of cards, for which five dollars were to be paid, and the proceeds appropriated to a new mission school, in which Lottie was greatly interested, and of which John Craig was superintendent. This had latterly thrown John and Lottie together again, and they were the best of friends; and Lottie's dainty little hand had

more than once rested on John's coat sleeve, and Lottie's eyes looked straight into his while she talked of some ragged boy, or devised some new scheme for the advancement of the school.

The musicale was her hobby now, and she must have Mr. Craig in at least three of the quartettes. And she asked if he would come to rehearsal at her house, and go with her to see the Misses Barrows, whose voices were wonderful for depth and richness, and one of whom played accompaniments remarkably well? It did not matter now that they sold bonnets and ribbons on Broadway during the week, and that Lottie would never dream of inviting them to her house except on an occasion like this, when she needed their services. She wanted them, and John must go with her and see them.

This was down in the office, and her fine face was all aglow with excitement, and her carriage was at the door, and John felt his blood stir a little as he looked at her and thought of a drive up Broadway with that fashionable turn-out. Yes, he would go to see the Misses Barrows; and he went and met them that night at Mrs. Steele's, and before Kitty came back from a visit she had made at home everything was arranged, and he had promised to sing in four pieces at least, and possibly five, and meet at Mrs. Steele's for practice three evenings in a week.

What Kitty said to him when she heard of it made him doubt a little the propriety of going to a house where his wife's existence had never yet been recognised by so much

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as an inquiry, and to which she would not in all human probability be invited; and when next day Lottie drove down to the office to consult with him about some new idea, he mustered courage to tell her that he wished she would find some one to take his place, as now that his wife had returned he did not like being away from her evenings, as he necessarily must be if he perfected himself in the difficult passages assigned to him. Womanlike, Lottie understood him at once, and knew that some bold move on her part was requisite if she would not lose him. And she could not do that now. He was too necessary to the success of her musicale, and with a mental anathema against the offending Kitty, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. Craig, you know I cannot do without you and will not. Tell your wife so, please. When did she return, and how is little Freddie Steele? By the way, I do not believe I have sent her an invitation yet, have I? She was gone, you know. Suppose I write her a little note now; that will be more friendly than a card," and snatching up a pen Lottie dashed off a half-formal, half-familiar note to Kitty, inviting her to the musicale, and apologizing for not having sent the invitation earlier.

"That will settle it," she thought, while John who saw only the flashing eyes and beaming face, began to descend from his stilts, and in his delight at having an autograph letter for Kitty from this high-born lady, forgot that in all the two years and a half of his married life this was the first time his wife had ever been alluded to.

But Kitty did not forget, no, seem as much elated with Lottie's autograph note as John thought she ought to be.

"She was much obliged to Mrs. Steele," she said, "for the invitation, but she could not for a moment think of accepting it. She should feel out of place among so many strangers."

And to this decision she firmly adhered, insisting, however, that her husband should go on with his practice, and not disappoint Mrs. Lottie. But to this John objected. There was something amiss somewhere, and his better way was to remain at home with Kitty, and so the next morning he wrote Mrs. Lottie a note, saying positively that he could not take the parts assigned to him, and mentioning as a substitute Will Archer, whose voice was quite as good as his own, and who read music even better than himself.

"Will Archer! That clown in my parlours! Never!" was Lottie's indignant exclamation, as she threw the note aside. "Cannot spend the time! Why wasn't he frank enough to say that obstinate wife of his would not let him? It all comes of those thoughtless words she heard me say at the sewing society. She has never been there since, and I really was sorry for it."

"But she don't know that," Conscience whispered; and then Lottie began to wonder what she could do to secure John's services.

She could not do without him, and to get him she was willing even to ask his wife's pardon, if necessary, and at

all events she would call the next day and apologize, for John's voice she must and would have at any cost.

* * * * *

Kitty's morning work was done. The little parlour which did duty as sitting-room and nursery too, was nicely swept and dusted, and everything was in its place. A bright fire was blazing in the grate. Freddie was asleep in his crib, the gift of Amasa Steele, who had mostly supplied the wants of his god-child since the day he stood with him at the font, and Kitty, in her neat delaine wrapper, with faultlessly clean collar and cuffs, was just sitting down to the pile of work which lay beside her "Wilcox & Gibbs," John's Christmas gift to her. She was never troubled with morning calls; for, though she had some few acquaintances in the city by this time, they were not of the fashionable kind to whom one hour is as free as another, and she had no thought of the honour in store for her, and which was even then at her very door, in the shape of a handsome little coupé, satin lined, and bearing the stamp of the very latest style in all its appurtenances, from the silver-tipped harness to the driver in his livery, and the footman, whose coat came nearly to the ground as he obsequiously held the door for his mistress to alight.

"It is a nut-shell of a house," was Lottie's mental comment, as she went up the steps and rang the bell. "Poor John, with his refined instincts, he ought to have done better;" and, so low down in Lottie's heart that it was



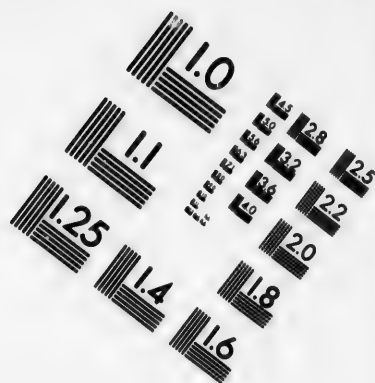
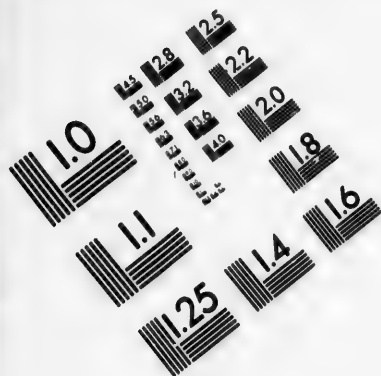
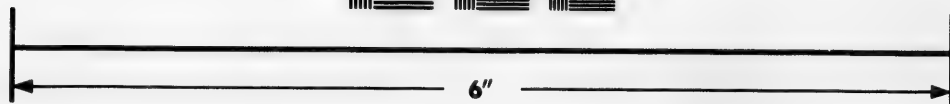
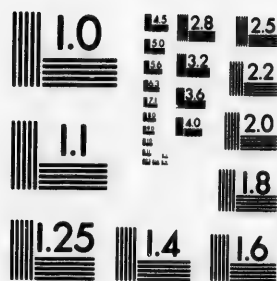


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hardly a wrong to Amasa Steele, there was the shadow of a regret that she had not thought twice before deciding not to encourage her father's confidential clerk.

But it was too late now. She was Mrs. Amasa Steele, and had come to call on John's wife, who, greatly to her amazement, opened the door herself! Kitty had heard the ring, and not seeing the stylish turnout in front, and knowing that, in all human probability, Susan's hands were in the bread, she went to the door, expecting to meet either a book agent or somebody inquiring if Dr. Jones lived there, he being her next neighbour, as she and John both had learned from sundry calls at all hours of the day and night. She was prepared for the agent and the patient of Dr. Jones, but not for the "grand dame" clad in velvet and Russian sable, whose big black eyes looked their surprise, but who nevertheless smiled sweetly, and asked in the blindest of tones if this were Mrs. Craig.

Lottie's first impulse had been to suppose the lady a servant, and ask for her mistress, but she had come for an object, and it suited her to be very amiable and even familiar.

"So kind in you to let me in yourself," she said, as she followed Kitty into the little parlour, and then apologized for not having called before.

She did not say out and out that she had intended calling, for she would not tell an absolute lie, but her manner implied as much, and she talked so fast, and made herself so agreeable, that Kitty began to be drawn toward her in spite of herself, and when she praised the new

Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machine, and pronounced it "the dearest plaything in the world," and then, pouncing upon little Freddie, called him a darling, and complimented his eyes and his hair, the conquest was more than half completed. But when Lottie ventured at last to introduce the musicale, and to say how sorry she was that Mrs. Craig had declined coming, and how very badly she felt to lose Mr. Craig's services, there was a peculiar look in Kitty's eyes which did not bode success to Mrs. Lottie's project. Still she was not disheartened. Her heaviest forces were still in reserve. The day was so fine and the air so bracing, would not Mrs. Craig like a drive in the Park? It would do her good, and the baby, too. Dear little fellow, he looked pale, though possibly that was his natural complexion.

Freddie had not been well for a day or two, and Kitty had wished that very morning that she was rich and could afford a drive, and now that it was so gracefully offered to her, she hesitated at first, and then finally accepted, and almost before she had time to think she was seated on the satin cushions by Mrs. Lottie's side, and was rolling over the level roads of the beautiful Central Park. Lottie insisted upon holding Freddie herself, and was so generally charming that Kitty was sorry when the carriage stopped at last at her own door.

Up to that moment not a word had been said of the musicale, but Lottie bided her time, and just as Kitty was getting out she laughingly said:

"You do not invite me, but I mean to go in and see if

I cannot coax you to reconsider your decision with regard to the musicale after all, and persuade your husband to sing. You don't know how much I am in earnest."

She followed Kitty into the house, and while her own fingers helped to disrobe little Freddie, she went on :

"If you do not come I shall think you have never forgiven those thoughtless words I said in your hearing the first time I ever saw you. You remember them, I am sure but you do not know how sorry I was, especially when I learned who you were. It was wrong under any circumstances, but we had been so annoyed with commonplace people coming just to be noticed, and besides that I'd had a little 'tiff' that morning with Amasa about calling on the dowdiest woman you ever saw, and I was not in the best of moods. You will forgive me, won't you, and be friends? Ah, that must be your lunch bell. I'd no idea it was so late."

"Stay to lunch, won't you?" Kitty faltered, devoutly hoping her visitor would decline; but she did not.

She was nearly famished, she said, and accepted the invitation graciously, and followed on to the dining-room, where the lunch-table was very neatly spread, for Kitty was particular about everything pertaining to her table, which was arranged with as much care for herself and Freddie as it was when she had company for dinner. And Susan waited nicely and suggested that she bring the fresh apple pie she had made that morning, and which looked so tempting with its white, flaky crust, that Mrs.

Lottie took a large piece, and ate a ginger-snap which Susan also brought.

Apple pie and ginger-snaps were evidently favourites in that house, and Lottie praised them both, and asked how they were made, and said her husband had told her about them. She was outdoing herself, and when at last she said good-bye and went out to her cross coachman, who had driven up and down, up and down, and actually sworn about her to the footman, she had Kittie's promise that John should sing, and that possibly she herself would attend the musicale, while to crown all there was in her pocket a receipt for ginger-snaps, which Susan had given her at the last moment, when she stood in the hall telling Kitty, "It would not be a dress affair—that anything she had would answer."

Lottie was in a very pleasant frame of mind when she reached home that day. She had accomplished her object, as she felt that she deserved to do, for had she not called on Kitty Craig and apologized for her rudeness, and taken her to drive, and lunched with her in that "under-ground" dining-room, not much longer than her butler's pantry, and lunched, too, on apple-pie and ginger-snaps, food which heretofore she had thought only fit for those made of coarser clay than herself, and was there not in her pocket a receipt for those same snaps, which poor, deluded Susan, who had taken a great fancy to the grand lady, thought maybe her cook might like, as Mr. Steele was so fond of them! Celine and ginger-snaps! and Lottie laughed merrily as she took out the receipt and began

to read, "One cup of molasses; half-a-cup of butter; and half-a-cup of lard——"

"Lard! Horrors, I can never insult her dignity with that. Amasa must go elsewhere for his snaps," and turning to the grate the little bit of paper was soon blackened upon the coals, and Amasa's chance for snaps at home was lost.

* * * * *

Kitty had said that John should sing, and she did not find it at all hard to keep her word. He was fond of music, and only too glad of an opportunity to serve Mrs. Lottie, who had been and who continued to be so very kind to Kitty. Lottie never did anything by halves, and now she had taken up the Craigs she meant to keep them up until after the musicale at least, and she frequently sent to Kitty flowers and fruit, and even her carriage for the dear little boy to take the air, and Kitty, though she in a measure understood it all, wisely concluded to accept the goods the gods provided, and submitted patiently to John's absence three nights in a week, and when he was home, played the music for him, accompanying him with her voice until she was almost as familiar with it as he was himself, and, as he declared, played better than the Misses Barrows, who did not always keep perfect time or give the best expression.

Kitty was going to the musicale, too, and she began to look forward to it with a great deal of pleasure, although she dreaded it somewhat, inasmuch as "she had nothing

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to wear." All those pretty silks made at the time of her marriage were out of style. The sleeves were too large, the waists too small, and "they had not a bit of stuck-up behind," Susan said, when she tried them on one after another to see if they would do. Only one was at all "*au fait*" in that respect, and that a plain black silk, which, having been made over the summer previous, was nearly enough "*bouffant*" in appearance to suit the fastidious Susan.

"Some do take a newspaper," she said, as she tried to make the overskirt stand out as far as Mrs. Steele's had done. "Some do take a newspaper and tie on, and if you was to do that you'd bunch out beautiful."

But Kitty declined the newspaper, and when the night of the musicale came she looked very pretty and modest in her black silk, with her coral and real lace, and John kissed her proudly and told her she was sure "to pass muster." They were among the first arrivals, and they found the house ablaze with light and full of flowers, while Lottie herself was splendid in silk, and lace, and jewels, and in a high state of excitement. The last rehearsal had been very satisfactory and she had reason to expect a great success. But where were the Misses Barrows, her pianist and soprano? They had promised to be early, and it lacked but half an hour of the time appointed for the first piece, and they had not yet appeared.

"Dressing, probably, as if anybody will care what they wear," she said to Kitty, thus showing the estimate in which she held them outside the services she desired.

There was a sharp ring at the door and a servant brought a note to Lottie, who, feeling intuitively that it in some way concerned her greatly, tore it open at once, her face flushing and then turning pale as she read that the Misses Barrows had just received news that their mother was dying, and they must start for home that night if they would see her alive. It was a bitter disappointment, and Lottie felt as if that poor woman dying in that little village in Ohio had somehow injured her. But there was no help for that now. The Barrows were out of the question, and in her utter helplessness and distress, she turned to John to know what they should do.

"It is a failure, of course," she said, and the great tears stood in her fine eyes.

John hesitated a moment and glanced toward his wife, and then, to her utter dismay, replied :

"Not necessarily an entire failure, perhaps. I think it just possible that Mrs. Craig can play the accompaniments and, possibly, sing as well."

"Oh, John," Kitty gasped, while Lottie's black eyes flashed a curiously doubtful glance at her, and Lottie's voice said :

"*She—your wife,*" as if even to her the idea was preposterous.

"Yes, my wife," John answered proudly. "She has a fine voice and was accounted a good musician at home."

"And will she—will you try?" Lottie asked, willing, now that her first feeling of surprise was over, to grasp at a straw. "Dear Mrs. Craig, will you try? It is a posi-

tive failure if you do not, I might ask that horrid Mrs. Banks, but her voice is like a peacock's. Do, Mrs. Craig, and I will love you for ever."

She had her arm around Kitty's waist and was drawing her toward the piano, where in a moment poor, bewildered Kitty found herself seated with piles of music before her, and a crowd of strange people staring at her and asking each other who that little nun-like woman was, and where the Misses Barrows were. Very softly Kitty played over a few of the more difficult places, and Lottie, who was a judge of fine playing, began to feel confidence in her new performer, and whispered encouragingly:

"You are doing splendidly," while to herself she groaned: "Oh, if I only knew what her voice was."

She did know ere long, and as Kitty's clear, bird-like tones began to fill the room, growing sweeter, and clearer, and stronger, as Kitty became more confident of herself, she could have hugged the little woman in her joy, and did kiss her when the musicale was over and pronounced a perfect success.

"You are a darling, a second Nilsson. I shall never forget this, never," she said, while many of her friends crowded around Kitty, asking for an introduction, and thanking her for the treat she had given them. "And to think she never tried the music before! It is wonderful," Lottie kept saying, while others, too, expressed their surprise that she could play such difficult music at sight.

For a few moments Kitty sat irresolute; then her love

of truth prevailed over every other feeling, and crossing to where John stood, she put her hand on his arm and said: "Please let me speak a word to you all."

In an instant there was a hush throughout the room, and every eye was fixed upon the brave little woman who would not even act a lie, and whose voice was very clear and distinct, as she said: "It would be wrong for me to leave an impression on your minds that I never tried that music before. I have played it many times at home for my husband, and sang it with him when he was practising. I cannot play at sight like that. I am not a very fine musician."

"But you are a good, conscientious, little darling!" was Lottie's impulsive exclamation, while a murmur of admiration for this unexpected frankness ran through the room. "I could never have done that, I know I could not. I should just let them think it was my first effort, but somehow I love you better for it," Lottie whispered to Kitty, when for a moment they stood together alone, and as she said it, the fashionable woman of the world felt that she had learned a lesson of good from plain, simple-hearted Kitty, who found herself the belle of the evening, and received so much attention that when at last she was put into Lottie's carriage and sent home, with Lottie's kiss warm on her lips, and Lottie's assurance that she should see a great deal of her now that she knew her, she felt herself to be in a bewildered, dazed kind of state, sure of nothing except that the door of society, so long locked and barred against her was open now, and that if

she chose, she could enter the charmed circle she had once thought so desirable.

"Guess what I've brought you, little woman? An invitation to dine with Mrs. Steele! What think you of that?" John said to Kitty one night, about a week after the drawing-room musicale. "The Guiles and Orrs are to be there, too. Quite an affair! You don't suppose there would be time for you to get a new dress made, do you?"

John was a good deal excited, and, if the truth was told, a little proud of being invited to a company dinner with the old and haughty members of the firm.

"Just our own people, you know—papa's family and the Orrs," Lottie had said to him, and John felt that he was recognised as one of "our own people," and was flattered accordingly, and said he knew no reason why he should not accept; and thought to himself that Kitty should have a new dress, made with puffs, and ruffles, and bows, and which should stand out like Lottie Steele's, and have a New York look.

Of the cost of such a dress, and the time and trouble to get it up, he knew nothing. He only thought Kitty should have one, and put a fifty dollar bill in his pocket for the emergency, and went home half an hour earlier than usual to tell Kitty of the honour in store for her. And Kitty was pleased, too, and her face flushed a little as she said she guessed the old black silk would have to do duty again, as a new one, such as he had in his mind, was far beyond their means.

"When is it?" she asked, and then John felt again a little twinge he had experienced when Mrs. Lottie named Sunday as the most convenient time for getting "all the family," as she termed them, together.

"Sunday, at six o'clock," she had said, adding, when she saw the questioning look on John's face: "You know it is dark now at six, and the Sabbath ends at sundown; besides that, I mean to have some sacred music in the evening, so be prepared, please."

John would rather the dinner had been on some other day, but what people like the Guiles and Steeles did must be right, and he had not a thought that Kitty would object. But she did—firmly and decidedly.

"God never meant that His day should be remembered by giving dinner parties," she said. "That was not keeping it holy, and she could not go to Mrs. Steele's, much as she would like to." And to this decision she stood firm; and when John met Mr. Steele next day in the office, he told him to say to Mrs. Steele that he regretted it exceedingly, but he must decline her invitation to dinner.

"The fact is," he said, "my wife was brought up in New England, where I guess they are more strict about some things than the people in New York, and she thinks she——"

John hesitated as fearful that to give Kitty's reason would sound too much like a reproof, but Mr. Steele understood him and said, "She does not believe in Sunday dinner parties; that is what you mean. Well, well, I've seen the day when I did not, but that time seems to

me ages and ages ago. Somehow here in New York first we know we get to doing things which once we would not have done for the world, and Sunday visiting is one of them. I'll tell Lottie. She will be terribly disappointed, for she wanted you badly, but I guess your wife is right. I'm sure she is. Remember the Sabbath—I've most forgotten how it goes, though I used to say it the best of any of them, when I was a boy at home ;" and folding his hands behind him, Amasa Steele walked up and down his office, thinking of the summers years ago, when he sat in the old-fashioned pew in that little church at the foot of the mountain, and saw the sunshine lighting up the cross behind the chancel, and felt upon his cheek the air sweet with the fragrance of the hay cut yesterday in the meadow by the woods, and said his catechism to the white-haired rector, whose home was now in Heaven.

That time seemed long, long ago—ay, was long ago, before he was the city millionaire, and husband of the dashing, self-willed Lottie, who, while professing to believe just what Kitty did, practised a far different creed. All the tithes of anise, and mint and cummin she brought, but she neglected the weightier matters, and her dark eyes flashed angrily for a moment when she heard Kitty's reason for declining the Sunday dinner.

"As if she were so much better than anybody else," she said, and she was going on to say more when her husband cut her short with, "I suppose she does not feel like going straight from the altar to a dinner party. Isn't it communion next Sunday in your church?"

Yes, it was, but Lottie had forgotten that, and her face flushed as her husband thus reminded her of it. The two did not seem to be wholly congruous, and so she staid at home next Sunday, and felt a strange feeling of disquiet, and thought more of Kitty Craig, and how she would look with that expression of peace on her face when she turned away from the altar than she did of the grand dinner which was being prepared in her kitchen, and which, though pronounced a success by those of her guests who cared nothing for the fourth commandment, seemed to her a failure. Nothing suited her; everything was wrong, from the colour of the gravy to the flower in her step-mother's hair, and the fit of Mrs. Orr's dress; and when all was over, and the company gone, and she was alone with her thoughts and the Bible she tried to read, which by some chance she opened at the words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," she said to herself, "I don't believe I'll ever try to have another dinner party on Sunday."

She went to see Kitty the next day and chided her for her absence, and called her a little Methodist and a Puritan, and asked how she came to be so strait-laced, and ended with: "But I believe you are right after all, only here in the city people do differently, and you will be like us in time."

"I trust I never may forget that God is in the city as well as in the country," was Kitty's reply, which Lottie pondered long in her heart, and which at last bore the fruit which ripens on the everlasting hills of glory.

* * * * *

It is two years since the night of the musicale, and more than one carriage with servants in livery and ladies gayly dressed has stopped at Kitty's door, and Kitty has the *entrée* to many a fashionable house. But having tasted the once coveted apple and found how unsatisfying it was, she has put it from her and sees but little of the *beau monde* save such as she sometimes meets at the house of Lottie Steele, who is now her best friend, and whose carriage stands at her door on the night of which we write. There was a message from Mr. Steele, to John and Kitty Craig, telling them to come immediately for Lottie, he feared, was dying.

There were tears in Kitty's eyes, and a throb of pain in her heart, as she read the note and then prepared for the drive. There was a hushed air about the house as if death had already entered there, and the servant who opened the door spoke in a low whisper, as in reply to Kitty's questions she said, "Very low, and asking for you. Will you go up now?"

Without waiting to throw aside her wrappings, Kitty followed up the stairs, past the room where Lottie's week-old baby girl was sleeping, and on to the chamber where the young mother lay. There was the pallor of death on her face, and her eyes seemed larger and blacker than ever; but they lighted up suddenly and her white cheek flushed when she saw Kitty come in.

"Oh, Mrs. Craig, I am so glad. I wanted to tell you how much I owe you, and that but for you I could not be

as happy lying here right in the face of death—for I am going to die, I know it and feel it—but first I want to see baby baptized, and you and your husband must be her sponsors. Please, Am, tell them to bring her in."

The child was brought, and the clergyman, who had been waiting for the Craigs, was summoned from the parlour below.

"I would call her Kitty," Lottie said, as she laid her hand on the silken curls of the little one, "but Am wants her named for me. Poor Am! I didn't think he'd care so much. I'm sorry I have not done better," she continued, looking up into the face of her husband, who gave one great choking sob as he whispered: "Don't, Lottie, don't. You *have* done well;" then taking the little girl in his arms, he held it so low that Lottie's hand rested as in blessing on its head all through the first of the service, until the clergyman took the little one himself and baptized it, "Charlotte Maude."

Then, when all was over and the clergyman gone, Lottie said, "Hold me, Am; raise me up and let me lay my head on your arm while I talk to Mrs. Craig, and tell her how much good she has done me, and how her speaking the truth so frankly that night of the musicale, and her refusing to come to my dinner on Sunday, set me to thinking that she possessed something which I did not; and the more I thought about it, the more I saw of her consistent life, the more I was convinced that my religion was one of mere form, and that my heart had never been touched. I had been confirmed, it is true, but I did not know what

for, except that it was the proper thing to do, and was expected of me. There is too much of that kind of thing done, and young people need more instruction, more personal talks than they get oftentimes, and so the church is harmed. I meant to do right, and I kept all the feasts and holy-days, and denied myself many things in Lent, and thought I was a saint to do it, and all the while was just as selfish and proud as I could be, and felt above every body, and was bad to Am——”

“No, Lottie, never bad,” and Mr. Steele pressed the hand he held in his, while Kitty wondered to see this grave, quiet man so tender and loving when she had heretofore thought him cold and indifferent.

“Yes, I was bad,” Lottie said. “I’ve never been the wife I ought to have been, and I’m so sorry now, and when I’m gone I want you to think as kindly of me as you can, and bring baby up to be just such a woman as Kitty Craig. Not fashionable, Am, though she might be even that and a good woman, too. There are many such, I know, but do not let her put fashion before God. Don’t let her be what I have been. Mrs. Craig will see to her, and tell her of her mother, who was a better woman before she died; for I do believe I am, and that the Saviour is with me, and has forgiven even me. I’d like to live for baby’s sake, and show Am that I could be good, but I am willing to die, and ready, I trust; and maybe if I get well I should be bad again; so it is right, and Heaven knows best. Lay me down now, husband, and let Kitty Craig kiss me good-by, and tell me she forgives the cruel

words I said when I first saw her, and my neglect after that."

She seemed like a little child in her weakness and contrition, and Kitty's tears fell like rain as she gave the farewell kiss, and said that she had long ago forgotten the insult offered her.

"Now go: I breathe better when there is no one here but Am," Lottie said. "And when you come again, maybe I shall be gone, but I hope I shall be at peace where there is no more pain or temptation to be bad."

So John and Kitty went out together, and left her alone with her husband, who drew the covering about her, and, smoothing her tumbled pillow, bade her sleep if she could. And Lottie slept at last, while her husband watched beside her with his eyes fixed upon her white face, and a heavy crushing pain in his heart as he thought of losing her now, just as he had a glimpse of what she might be to him, and as he hoped, just as she was beginning to love him.

He had always loved her in his quiet, awkward way—always been proud of her; and though her frivolities and inconsistencies had roused his temper at times, and made him say harsh things to her and of the religion she professed, he had through all been fond of her and believed in God—that is, believed in the God he had learned about in the New England Sunday-school at the foot of the mountain, and he thought of Him now, and for the first time in years his lips moved with the precious words:

"Our Father."

That prayer had once been so familiar to him, and as he said it now the past came back again, and he was a boy once more, with all the glow and fervour of youth, and Lottie was to him all she had been when he first called her his wife, only he seemed to love her more; and, with a choking sob, he cried:

"I can't let Lottie die. Oh, Father, save her for me, and I'll be a better man."

Softly he kissed the white hand he held, and his tears dropped upon it, and then a feeble voice said, in some surprise:

"Am, are you crying, or was it a dream? and did you pray for me, and do you love me sure, and want me to get well?"

"Yes, darling, I do," and the sobs were loud now, and the strong man's tears fell fast upon the face turned so wonderingly and joyfully toward him.

"Then I will get well," Lottie said; "or at least I'll try. I really thought you would be happier without me. I've been such a bother, and it was not worth while to make an effort, but, if you do love me and want me, it's different, and I feel better already. Kiss me, Am, and if I live we'll both start new and be good—won't we?"

Lottie did not die, and when Kitty went to inquire for her next morning she found her better and brighter, with an expression of happiness on her face which she had never seen there before.

"I almost went over the river," she said; "and felt sure I was dying when Am's voice called me back. Dear old

Am, do you think he actually prayed for me, that I might get well, and I thought once he did not believe in praying. Anyway he used sometimes to say that my prayers were all humbug, and I guess they were; some of those long ones I used to make when I came from a dancing party at two in the morning, and he was tired and sleepy and wanted me to turn off the gas. But he is different now, and says he loves me after all I've been. Why, I never gave him a speck of love, or kissed him of my own accord. But I'm going to do better; and I guess God will let me live to prove to Am that there is a reality in our church as well as in others. He says he believes in the Methodist—his grandmother was one—and when we were first married he used to want me to play those funny hymns about 'Travelling Home,' and 'Bound for the Land of Canaan,'—and he believes a little in the Presbyterians, and some in the Baptists, but not a bit in the Episcopalians—that is, he didn't till he knew you, who, he thinks, are most as good as a Methodist; and I am going to try and convince him that I am sincere, and mean to do right and care for something besides fashion and dress. I have baby now to occupy my time, and I am glad, for when the spring bonnets and styles come out, my head might be turned again, for I do dote on lace and French flowers. Do you think I ought to wear a mob cap and a serge dress to mortify myself?"

Kitty did not think so; and when two months later she met, down in one of the miserable alleys in the city, where want, and misery, and vice reigned supreme, "a

love of a " French chip hat, trimmed with a bunch of exquisite pansies and blonde lace, she did not believe that the kindness paid to the poor old paralytic woman who died with her shrivelled hand clasped in Lottie Steele's, and her lips whispering the prayer Lottie had taught her, was less acceptable to God than it would have been had Lottie's face and form been disfigured by the garb with which some well-meaning women make perfect frights of themselves.

Lottie's heart was right at last, and Amasa never muttered now nor swore if he could not find his slippers while she was saying her prayers. On the contrary, he said them with her, and tried to be a better man, just as he said he would, and at last one morning in June, even the heated city seemed to laugh in the glorious summer sunshine, he knelt before the altar and himself received the rite of which he had once thought so lightly.

" We are so happy now," Lottie said to Kitty one day. " And I am so glad of Maudie, though I did not believe in babies once; and Am is just like a young lover, and I'd rather have him than all the men in the world if he was fifty his last birth-day, and I am only twenty-five; and do you know I charge it all to you, who have influenced me for good ever since I first saw you, and made that atrocious speech."

" Let us rather both ascribe to Heaven every aspiration after a holier, better life which we may have," was Kitty's reply, but her heart was very happy that day, as she felt that she might perhaps have been an instrument of good

to one household at least, and that to have been so was infinitely of more value and productive of more real happiness than getting into society, which she had once thought so desirable, and which, now that she was or could be in it if she chose, seemed so utterly worthless and unsatisfactory.

THE END.

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